



N. M. Klimon

1951
NORMAN MACDONALD

WORK

NORMAN MacDONALD

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

REV. NEIL MCKINNON

PASTOR OF BURNS' CHURCH, MOSA.

EDITED BY THE

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OF GLENCOE

ASSISTED BY THE

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LATE OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, LONDON

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY THE EDITOR

TORONTO :

JAMES BAIN & SON

1889

65203

PREFACE.

SHORTLY after the death of Mr. McKinnon, I was requested to edit some of his sermons and prepare a *Biographical Sketch* of the author. Having the oversight of a large congregation which incurred no small tax upon my energies the work was undertaken with misgivings. The co-operation of ministerial brethren, who were intimate with Mr. McKinnon, was solicited ; the Rev. John Scott, D.D., formerly of St. Andrew's Church, London, and the Rev. Arch. Stewart, of Shakespere, kindly agreed to give what assistance they could. Dr. Scott read the sermons over carefully making such corrections as might enable the printer to read the manuscript, as well as verifying scripture quotations and making such emendations as could well be made without rewriting the discourses. This involved much labor on the part of Dr. Scott, without whose assistance the present volume would not likely have appeared. The sermons are, however, substantially as the author left them and consist of his regular ministrations to rural congregations. They were not prepared with a view to publication, and had the author been living to see them through the press they would have appeared in a different form, although it is be

lieved that the simple, and at times commonplace, and loose style may render them more acceptable to those who were acquainted with Mr. McKinnon. It was thought that many who had been under the ministry of the author, as well as others to whom he was known, would be glad to possess in a permanent form the teaching of one so universally esteemed. Besides it was hoped that some pecuniary benefit might accrue to the widow and children after meeting the expenses of publication.

Of the sermons, Dr. Scott says :

"There is generally given in them a correct and clear analysis of the text, and the truth is exhibited and applied with much earnestness and point. The way in which the glorious plan of redemption, and the eternal blessings of grace provided in it are presented and urged on the acceptance of the hearers, shows clearly how much the preacher's own soul was possessed by the truth which he taught. Many in reading the discourses will, no doubt, by the aid of memory, be able to connect with what they read the earnestness of voice, the action and the expression of feature with which they once heard the words proclaimed to them. And all to whom Christ is precious, all who have revealed in them a sense of the wonderful nature of the work He has done for them and is doing in them will appreciate the truth as presented in these discourses and find in them the kind of spiritual nourishment which their souls desire and need. The Lord who often

employs humble means in accomplishing His glorious purposes may use His gracious truth, as simply and earnestly stated in these discourses, to the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints."

In preparing the *Biographical Sketch* I had access to a very voluminous journal detailing the daily events of his life. Such selections were made from it as were thought to throw light upon the different sides of his character. The Rev. Mr. Stewart made valuable contributions to this sketch in giving an account of his college life and of his ministry at Wardsville and Aldborough.

I have only to add that my share of the work has been a source of no small degree of pleasure, giving me, as it did, a better acquaintance with one whom I regard as the most saintly man with whom I have had the privilege of being acquainted.

D. C.

THE MANSE,

Glencoe, July, 1889.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE REV. NEIL MCKINNON was born on the Island of Tiree, west of Scotland, within sight and hearing of the waters of the Atlantic. Here he passed his youth, subject to all the influences which the great sea, with its fleets of war and commerce, its wonderful wealth of products, its majestic billows, and its placid bosom, never fails to exert upon those who live on its shores. When, in 1871, he visited Scotland, he says of the island of his birth :

"I had thoughts of pleasure and gratitude running through my mind when I found my feet once again on the rocks, sands, and grassy lawns of Tiree. I was struck at once with the desolate and deserted appearance of the place, when I compared it with my recollections of it. We set out for the West, my friend having brought me a horse and saddle. A few others, who were intent upon business, accompanied us with carts. I rode on horseback part of the time, and part of the time in one of the carts. I was much struck with the extent of land in the centre of the island, which is a moor covered with gray rock, and fit for nothing but pasture for sheep and cattle. I could see the lapwings flying over the moor, where they have their nests, and where they rear their young, as in the days of my boyhood."

At an early age he was sent to school. From

childhood he showed more than ordinary aptitude and love for study. He attended one of the best schools on the island, and seems to have received good opportunities for study. Here, neither in the enjoyment of luxuries nor straitened by poverty, under the wholesome discipline of the strong hand of the Scottish Church, Mr. McKinnon spent his happy boyhood days. Even in his youth he was thoughtful and earnest, looking upon life with an air of seriousness which he retained to the end of his life. In the year 1846, when about eighteen years of age, he, with his parents, brothers and sisters, left Tiree and set sail for America, which they reached about the beginning of harvest. They settled in the Township of Brock, in the County of Ontario. In this large and new land of their adoption, they set to work to secure comfort and happiness. In the beginning of the following year, Mr. McKinnon engaged with the trustees of School Section No. 8, Brock, as a common school teacher. This he, in common with many other ministers, found to be an excellent preliminary training for presenting Gospel truth. A friend writes, in regard to the examination he had to undergo before being deemed qualified to enter upon his duties:—"Trustees in those days stood in the capacity of examiners of school teachers. The examination consisted in hearing him read a piece in a book called 'The Collection,' which he used at school in Scotland. When he had finished reading, one of the trustees turned to the others and asked, 'How did

that please you?' to which they replied, 'Very good,' after which they engaged him." We smile at the primitive character of this test of scholarship, and have no doubt that many incompetent men got into the profession, from whose defective teaching their pupils are suffering to this day. Yet we find that many teachers, who had to pass only such examinations as this, succeeded in laying the foundation of the usefulness of many who, to-day, occupy leading positions in the country. He next taught in Eldon, where he made many warm friends. While here, he, for the first time, made public profession of faith in Jesus Christ, being between twenty and twenty-one years of age. After this, he taught on the second concession of Brock, where he made the acquaintance of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, a Presbyterian minister, with whom he took lessons preparatory to going to college.

Having decided to enter the ministry, he became enrolled as a student in Knox College, in the session of 1853-54. After this he kept a diary at intervals, from which we learn much of his public and private life. There are, however, periods, extending over several years, in which he kept no record. The information we get from this source is, consequently, broken. Enough is given to enable us to form a fair estimate of his character and life. Some years after he began to keep a diary, we find the following entry, which gives us an idea of what he was accustomed to jot down :

"To-day, among other things, I bought this book, in which I intend to record chief incidents of daily life, chiefly personal and temporal, and occasionally spiritual and religious experiences which I may have. I have not yet attempted, nor do I intend to record with minuteness, my spiritual conflicts and triumphs. I am not quite sure that those who have done so have been thereby of great service to the Church of God; at any rate, I have sometimes doubted, in reading even such memoirs as those of R. M. McCheyne, whether this minute description of the working of the remains of his corruption have been of great service; although, on the whole, I must acknowledge, that no other book of that kind is ever so powerful and effective in solemnizing my mind. May the Lord, who has hitherto nourished and cherished me, be ever kind to me and mine, for the sake of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

His diary is largely taken up with recording transactions of a business, professional and domestic character. It is, consequently, of comparatively little interest to the general reader; yet we gather from the voluminous mass what forms a true mirror, reflecting the living, thinking man. It reveals the drift of his thoughts, and brings us into those fields where man spends the greatest part of his life, when he is alone with his real self. Here we find a man's true life. Could we follow him in all the meanderings of his thought, we should know him. In many passages

Mr. McKinnon brings us into the innermost sanctuary of his soul, and gives us a word-picture of its operations. It must be confessed, however, that one unacquainted with him might judge from his diary that he was of a gloomy and austere disposition, that his face would seldom radiate with a smile. Those who knew him best know what a false estimate this would be of their genial, humorous and affectionate friend. It is because his imperfections and weaknesses forced themselves powerfully upon him, that he so often indulges in sentiments of self-depreciation. The great, perfect standard of human excellence seems to have been constantly before his eyes. In comparing himself with that divine ideal he was conscious of a vast disparity, making the burden of his life to be, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

The first entry in his diary was made towards the close of his first session at college, when he writes:

"My first session at college is drawing to a close. The goodness and kindness of God have been manifested to me and to my fellow-students in a very eminent degree. No obvious mark of God's displeasure is upon any of us; but rather, marks of His love and providential care. This evening we had our last missionary meeting for the session, and we separated under very favorable circumstances. Oh, how contrite and broken-hearted ought we to be for sinning against

such a Benefactor and Protector! We often sin against God in various ways, and especially I myself. Oh, how prone my heart is to wander, how slow to believe the Word of God, and to rest with faith upon its promises! How much injury do I do to my soul by not living always close to Jesus! May God grant unto me His Holy Spirit to teach me in the way of truth and holiness. Now that I am preparing to change my place of residence, may there be also a preparing to serve God in newness of life."

On the following day he writes :

"While in the act of writing the foregoing, Mr. _____ came into my room with a very neat copy of the 'Union Bible Dictionary' in his hand, and offered it to me as a token of remembrance, saying that he would write my name upon it if I would accept of it; upon which my feelings carried on such an excitement that I really could not determine whether I should take it or not, especially because I find myself so situated that I am not able to make any returns at the present time; however, fearing that my refusal of it might offend, I accepted of it, thanking him most cordially for his kindness. I really do not wish people to be laying me under obligations while I am not in a position to make returns in some shape. It harasses my feelings. I am afraid it has a tendency to break down my independence of spirit. This, I fear, will keep me in confusion for a long time. If I had any way of refusing it, I would have done so. May the

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He spent his first college vacations teaching in different places. Whatever he was engaged in, or wherever he was, he carried with him the spirit of the true theological student. He was not yet set apart by the consecrating hands of Presbyters, but he was conscious of having already received a higher consecration. He felt himself called to be an ambassador of Christ, and was not disobedient to the heavenly call. This call invited him to work always and at once in his Master's vineyard. Wherever he was, he strove to honor his Saviour by holy living and by seeking to work actively for Him. He was regular and faithful in attending public worship, and scrupulously watchful over his conduct. Naturally of a playful and humorous disposition, he was always an agreeable and entertaining companion. Many times he made reflections on his conduct at social gatherings, and was often disturbed and penitent because he thought he had given way to levity. He was accustomed to upbraid himself for his frivolous conversation, and to ask for grace to avoid his besetting sins. He believed, however, that the reality of religion may be manifested in the midst of social cheerfulness. He sought his highest pleasure in communion with God, and no one can read his diary without being convinced that what he sought he found where he looked for it. In the company of his Heavenly Father he passed the

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greatest part of his time. His chief concern was to honor Him and to be found in Christ.

During his summer holidays he felt a desire to engage in Christian work, but his modesty and sense of unworthiness caused him to shrink from initiating any movement. While engaged in Public School teaching he wished to open a Sabbath School. Hesitating as to the course he should take, his pastor suggested to him that he would do well to organize one. He expressed his gladness and said it was just what he was wishing to do. The school was accordingly organized and proved a source of pleasure and spiritual benefit to him. His thoughts were also directed to the opening of a prayer meeting, thinking if it were organized he might lead it occasionally. In the midst of all his work and plans, he felt strongly his need of divine help. During his first vacation, he writes :

“ Strange reasonings pass through my mind with regard to my work. I cannot succeed without the special blessing of God, and without maintaining a close communion with Him. But alas, it does not seem to be very close at present! Oh, may Jesus be to me all in all! I do not seem to have the same tenderness of feeling and submissiveness of disposition which I once possessed.” He longed for the communion with God, expressed by the Psalmist : “ When I awake I am with Thee.” “ This morning,” he says, “ although it is Sabbath, the first observation I made of my thoughts I found them upon the mountains of vanity, among the affairs of the world.”

His goodness was not mere Sunday or prayer-meeting piety. He strove to have "his days bound each to each by deeds of piety." He gave to his pupils what is always the most important part of religious teaching, that communicated by the unconstrained Christian personality. The influence of this spontaneous teaching is always and inevitably felt by pupils, it is irresistible. It were good if all our schools were equipped with men of devout Christian spirits. Then we should not fear for the safety of the children, whatever the "Regulations" from the Educational Department might be in regard to religious teaching in the Public Schools. Mr. McKinnon took advantage of his opportunities to impress positive religious truths upon his pupils. This has been done and can be done, incidentally, by all who know and feel the power of religion without touching upon what is offensive to any Christian body. He writes on this subject :

" Got some arrangements made in my school-house to-day, for a more efficient management of the school. Took occasion to talk to the children before evening prayers, of the affairs of the Kingdom. Oh, may God bless whatever efforts I may make for His cause, and may He enable me to put forth such efforts as He will bless ! "

Before the close of his first session at college, the students agreed to spend an hour at stated times in prayer. All would thus be engaged at the same time in adoring, making requests and giving thanks to God. Of this hour he speaks :

"The hour for the commencement of our concert of prayer is approaching. Oh, may there be showers of blessings descending upon me and upon my fellow-students, in connection with these appointed seasons! I am at a loss how to spend an hour in prayer, my mind seems so contracted that I do not know how I could form petitions, acknowledgments and thanksgivings for an hour. Oh, my leanness! How shall I spend a whole eternity in this kind of employment? This will not do, I must shake off my stintedness and meagerness. May the Lord enlarge my mind!"

Again he writes :

"It was half-past eight o'clock before I recollect ed the hour for concert prayer, and then I was engaged in family worship, after which I retired and engaged in my private devotions. Found much consolation in reading a portion of the Songs of Solomon, in connection with portions of the Epistles. May I grow in grace and holiness. May I enjoy the light of God's countenance and may I be directed by the Holy Spirit."

While at college he was under the excellent instruction of the celebrated Professor Young, to whom he was deeply attached. He often expressed his deep obligations to him. He writes of him :

"Yesterday I attended Professor Young's Bible Class for the first time this year. He is an admirable man. No one who has in any measure tasted that God is gracious, can attend his class without profiting

by it. I ought to be very thankful that I am this session under his direct tuition. May the Lord give me grace and strength to improve all the means which I enjoy of increasing my knowledge."

These extracts will give the reader a fair conception of the life of Mr. McKinnon when he was preparing for the ministry. The following excellent sketch of his college life is given by the Rev. A. Stewart, of Shakespeare, a beloved class-mate, a devoted friend, and his predecessor as pastor of the Mosa congregation :

" My intimacy with the late Rev. Neil McKinnon, of Mosa, commenced at Knox College, Toronto, during the Session of 1855-56. At that period of our studies he was a session behind me, though he finished his College Course two years before me. The staff of Professors consisted of Dr. Willis, afterwards Principal and Professor of Systematic Theology, etc.; Professor Young, Professor of Logic, Mental and Moral Philosophy, and Exegetics; and Dr. Burns, Professor of Church History, and the Evidences of Christianity. The most of the students boarded at the college, and were much like the members of one family.

" We had the very best facilities for becoming intimately acquainted with each other. We gathered around the same table to eat, and at the same table we joined, morning and evening to worship God. We then separated to our respective rooms, either to prosecute

our studies or to get ready to attend our various classes. In the early evening, most enjoyable of all, we marched out in parties for our walking exercise, often accomplishing two or three miles and sometimes more, ere we returned to our evening work. During these rambles Mr. McKinnon was frequently my companion and our conversation regarded various topics. Sometimes we spoke of our past religious experience, but, perhaps, most frequently we entered upon a keen discussion regarding some point of interest taught in the class-room, especially to points of interest which came up in Professor Young's lectures.

"Professor Young was then rising to the meridian of his glory as a teacher of Speculative Philosophy. His great mind was given intensely to this subject. Possessed of an astonishing amount of varied and accurate scholarship he brought it all to bear on his favorite theme. As a practical teacher during our college period he was the 'lion of the day.' I question if any since, in Canada, has been his equal. No student could sit under his tuition and remain indifferent to the thoughts and theories he propounded. He always made himself master of his subject before he entered the class-room. In communicating knowledge he was original, clear, practical and enthusiastic. His quick eye speedily caught the listless student, and as speedily let fly an arrow at him, which lightly wounded his feelings and awakened his attention. These, however, were not the wounds of an enemy,

but those of a genuine friend. He would often speak to the class thus: 'Now, gentlemen, remember that you are not school boys, but grown-up men. Make good use of your time. It is not possible for me to teach you a large amount of knowledge during the short period I am with you; but if I could teach you to *think*, you will readily acquire knowledge yourselves.' This great teacher, a few days ago, has been suddenly called away to rest from his labors; yet many ministers of our Church, and others, pursuing different professions, will always acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Professor Young, for teaching them how to think. Mr. McKinnon always held the learned Professor in high esteem, and acknowledged his indebtedness to him for leading his own mind to habits of clear and accurate thinking. In giving prominence to Professor Young in this sketch, let not the impression be made that the other two Professors were lightly esteemed,—especially by the more thoughtful of the students. Dr. Willis was learned, sound, systematic, and full of enthusiasm in his prelections. Dr. Burns, though aged and frail in body, was vigorous as ever in mind, and sent home facts and dates in Church History and the Evidences with wonderful energy. Both of these gentlemen had a high place in Mr. McKinnon's estimation.

"Mr. McKinnon was not long within the college walls when I perceived that he was very popular among the students. This popularity arose from vari-

ous causes, and chief among them was his mental attainments. He was an excellent student in the various branches then taught in Knox College, and as an occasional student at University College. Some made a hobby of one or two branches, and neglected other branches, aiming at becoming specialists, but he gave diligent attention to all and was noted for general proficiency. He was always well prepared, and his answers to questions almost always correct, thus giving his teachers good satisfaction and indicating a mind of a high order. And withal, he was remarkably modest and unassuming. He never paraded his attainments. He always spoke with caution and moderation. In competition he was generally successful. I remember once, when a certain gentleman, through Professor Young, offered a prize consisting of some of Dr. Fairbairn's works to the student who stood first in an examination on Sir William Hamilton's Mental Philosophy, that Mr. McKinnon was one of four of us who competed. The Professor after examining our papers spoke highly of them all and would have given each of us a prize if he had not been limited to one. Mr. McKinnon's answers were so full and accurate that he had no difficulty in deciding in his favor.

"But our departed brother possessed many other excellent qualities, which won him the high esteem of his fellow-students. He was scrupulously pious, but not austere. He was affable, sociable, and could enjoy innocent humor, but he was never frivolous. He en-

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tertained a kind regard towards his fellow-students, was always considerate in his intercourse with them, and never attempted to provoke a laugh at the expense of wounding their feelings as some others did when opportunity afforded. He was a gentleman as well as a scholar. Some of the students were more prominent for special qualities, others by reason of cheek; but taking him, all in all, it is my conviction that he possessed the best balanced mind of any student during our college days."

Soon after the completion of his studies he was called to Wardsville and East Aldboro', which were then united as one charge. At the same time he received a call from Belmont. Both congregations were anxious and hopeful of getting him. They had their minds set upon him, and manifested an eager desire to get him for their minister. Great was the joy of the Wardsville and Aldboro' people when their suspense was broken by his decision to accept their call. The news was received with gladness by the whole congregation. Mr. McKinnon was their first settled pastor. This made his reception all the more cordial. The majority of his parishioners were from the Highlands of Scotland and from the north of Ireland. They entertained a feeling of the highest respect for the office and person of the minister. They received him as a messenger from Heaven and listened with warm appreciation to the truths he preached. The sturdy old settlers are going, one by one, and with them, we

fear, is going much of the reverence for divine things, which cannot fail to bring the soul nearer to the majesty of the Eternal. They had not much of the luxury nor many of the comforts of life. They were, with patient and persevering toil, clearing away the dense forests, struggling to obtain comfortable homes for themselves and their children, in this new land. They were the pioneers, the heralds of what ought to be the highest type of Christian civilization. They worked hard and were happy in the enjoyment of one another's company. They helped one another and sympathized with one another, as members of one large family. The mind lingers fondly on the old, rustic, primeval days, now gone forever. We may be pardoned for giving a sigh of regret as we dip into the past and uncover those sacred memories, the cottage prayer-meetings, the logging-bees, the old cart, the oxen, the cow-bells, the old log school-house with its benches of split logs, which formed the first church, where devout and grateful worshippers met to hear Mr. McKinnon in the early part of his ministry ; and we must not forget the old scow, where Peter Johnston, of esteemed memory, scarcely ever failed to meet Mr. McKinnon to ferry him and his horse across the historic Thames. The beautiful, enterprising village of Wardsville has had occasion to meet with many reverses. The railroad on the south gave rise to villages which deprived it of its chief customers, and several fires swept away valuable property, so that the Wards-

ville of to-day is but a shadow of the promising village of the early days of Mr. McKinnon's ministry. As he looked upon the changes which his first field had undergone Mr. McKinnon could well say, "the things which I have seen I now can see no more."

The field was large and the roads were bad. These were the days of the corduroy-roads (and of the proverbial Aldboro' mud.) In the spring and fall Mr. McKinnon was under the necessity of riding on horseback between his preaching stations. We remember the big clumsy grey horse, and the little lazy sorrel.

The Aldboro' congregation gained steadily in numbers and in wealth. Shortly after his settlement, a neat frame church was erected. This church has been re-modelled and re-fitted and is now one of the neatest of our country churches. With the progress of the congregation, came thoughts and proposals for a division of the pastoral charge, and shortly before Mr. McKinnon left Wardsville, Aldboro' was formed into a separate, self-sustaining congregation, and is now in a prosperous condition.

Mr. McKinnon always cherished a kindly and affectionate regard for his first congregation. Several years after he had left Wardsville and Aldboro', having had occasion to visit the latter, he writes :

"Preached in Argyle Church, Aldboro', in English and in Gaelic. Old memories came back. I had a pleasant day of it, a good meeting, fine day. The

country around has improved. The people are kind. The Lord bless them. The little white church looks as well as ever, and the old founders' faces looked natural." While at Wardsville he passed through one of the most anxious crisis of his life. This was occasioned by his receiving a call to the foreign mission field. During his college course as well as in the early part of his ministry, the claims of the heathen upon his services were strongly forced upon him. He often felt, and expressed a strong desire to become a foreign missionary. At an early stage of his college course, after reading about the aborigines of a heathen land, he writes :

" It is wonderful the depth of degradation into which man fell. From being a holy and happy being, he became a profane wretch ; but at the same time some traces remain, such as the achievements of intellect, which show that he was originally great. Blessed be God, who has opened a way for our recovery from the ruins of the fall."

Many things conspired against his entering upon such a life, the chief being the unsatisfactory condition of his health. He was not a robust man. In his diary we find frequent references to the feeble state of his health, throughout his whole ministerial life. Very often he was prostrate, and occupied the pulpit when he ought to have been in bed. This rendered him unfit for the hardships of foreign mission work. As an off-set to this, his earnest piety and varied mental

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attainments commended him to his brethren as one of the best qualified men available for the work in the foreign field. In June, 1886, the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church appointed him as missionary to the New Hebrides. Of this he says:

"Last Tuesday night, in Hamilton, at a meeting of the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church, I was appointed missionary to the New Hebrides, by the members of the Synod, standing up at the request of the Moderator. The subject had not long been before my mind, yet I was able, I trust, through grace, to accept the call. Oh, most blessed God, what a step is this that I have taken! Oh, pity me, pity me! Lord, give me grace that I may be enabled to go forward firmly, calmly, believingly, and humbly. Oh, make me not turn back! Gracious God, my heart is sad. Leave me not to myself, support and sustain me, make me instrumental in bringing the heathen to the knowledge of the truth. Lord, bless my dear sister and all my friends. Bless my congregation. Oh, give me a calm, right, Christian view of this step." Great was the sorrow of his attached congregation at the prospect of losing their beloved pastor. They determined to make an effort to retain him. The Presbytery of London met at Wardsville to consider the action of the Synod. A large part of all sections of his congregation was present. After a long discussion, the Presbytery refused to sustain the call to the New Hebrides. There was great rejoicing in the congregation at this decision.

In the year 1871, while he was minister at Wardsville, he made an extensive tour through Scotland and England. Although a young man on coming to Canada, he became thoroughly attached to, and identified with, his adopted country. To his attachment to Canada we find expression as he was taking leave of it to cross to the land of his nativity :

“ It was a beautiful day. We enjoyed the scenery of the St. Lawrence. It is a magnificent stream, and belongs to a fine country, which has become very dear to me. I did not indeed know that I had conceived such a strong patriotic feeling towards it till I started on a voyage from it across the great sea. Long may the Lord preserve my adopted country from the foot of the invader. Long may peace and religion reign and prevail therein. Land of my struggles and my many successes ! Land of my college days and my Gospel ministry ! Land where my mother has mingled with the dust, and where my father, in his old age, together with all my sisters and brothers are now living ! May the blessing of my God rest upon them all, and in God’s good mercy and great kindness, may I be again restored to my country, my friends and my congregation in due time ! ”

While in Scotland, on his way to the Greenock Fair, we find the following entry :

“ The Greenock Fair was still going on. It was melancholy to meet, as we did, so many drunken men, and these chiefly young men. When we entered

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Greenock we saw quarrelling and fighting. The mountebanks were busy at their work. We went through the tent-grounds on our way to the steamboat quay ; there we met more respectable people, who were going up and down on the excursions. It was a marvellous thing to see boat after boat calling almost every moment. Sometimes two would be together at once, discharging and receiving their freight of human beings. In some instances the number on board could not be short of a thousand people. I was endeavoring to compare their appearance with that of our Canadian and American people, and I felt convinced that our people on the other side would make a better general appearance in dress and features than these."

About the same time he gives an expression of his opinion of professional athletes :

"In the afternoon we went to see Highland games in Greenock. I judged there were about six thousand people present. The games consisted of races, jumping, dancing the Highland fling, etc. A few individuals had the games all to themselves ; among them was Donald Dinnie. It looked to me to be a low profession for a grown-up man to be a competitor in these games."

He thoroughly enjoyed the scenes and people of the old land. While there we find references to the little flock he left behind at Wardsville. They were often commended to the care and guidance of his heavenly Father at the throne of grace. He writes :

Biographical Sketch.

"I trust my people at Wardsville were not disappointed, but had the expected supply and the divine blessing. The Lord follow with His rich blessing the services of His house."

He returned with better health than he had ever enjoyed since entering the ministry. On his return to Wardsville he says :

"I found my key at Archer's, took a look through the house, and returned thanks to God for His mercy and goodness, by which I have been brought safely and comfortably across the sea to my home and people. Blessed be the Lord of my hope and salvation, Who has preserved me from dangers and accidents ; to Him I entrusted my cause and He has helped me. Blessed be His name forever."

Soon after his return from Scotland he received a call from Belmont, which he accepted. We have seen that this congregation extended him a call before his ordination at Wardsville, which he declined. Now, after many years, the old attachment continues, and they extend to him another invitation. To all those in his first congregation, who listened to his earnest appeals, and who witnessed the irreproachable life of their sainted pastor, his memory lingers as a hallowing influence, that will ever act as a constant force constraining the soul to walk in the heavenly road as they believed him to have walked, in constant fellowship with his loving Saviour.

We shall again allow one to speak of his ministry

at Wardsville who probably knew him better than any other living man, the Rev. A. Stewart :

" Mr. McKinnon was ordained at Wardsville by the Presbytery of London, on the 21st day of February, 1861. His charge then included Wardsville and East Aldboro'. I was ordained in Mosa on the 26th of November, 1862. Mr. McKinnon was present at my ordination and addressed the people. The manse of Wardsville and that of Mosa are about fourteen miles apart. We had occasion to meet frequently at either place, and spend happy hours—frequently nights—together. We helped each other at communions ; we were together on deputations, to hold and address missionary meetings, during which we often occupied the same bed ; for a number of years, under the old school system of the Province, we were both members of the Board of Public Instruction, which met semi-annually at Wardsville to examine teachers. The manse was my home while attending the Board meetings ; and also on many other occasions during Mr. McKinnon's pastorate at Wardsville. I had consequently the most ample opportunities for acquiring knowledge of himself personally, and of the matters that occupied his attention during that period of his life. He was then unmarried, and I believe that there was no other friend to whom he disclosed his mind more freely in regard to all matters, religious, ecclesiastical, scholastic, domestic or personal. If troubles arose that affected either himself or his congregation,

he consulted me ; if successful in his work he told me ; but always told me with the modest remark that God over-rules all our affairs, often bringing good out of seeming evil, and as often checking seeming success for ends known to Himself alone. We had great mutual confidence in each other, and still I found that he possessed a certain amount of shrewd reserve in disclosing his mind, even to his most intimate friends, in matters personal or otherwise, when he anticipated that no good, but possibly evil might result from such disclosure. This trait of character was very useful to him as a pastor. Some time afterward, during his pastorate at Belmont, a member of his congregation, having occasion to express his mind regarding his ministerial character, remarked, 'I have known a good number of ministers, but give *me* Mr. McKinnon for wisdom.'

HIS WORK AT WARDSVILLE.

When Mr. McKinnon first settled at Wardsville his ministerial duties were onerous. He supplied two congregations, Wardsville and East Aldboro'. The latter was entirely rural, and larger in number of families. The two churches were fully six miles apart. The roads were bad, and, during certain seasons of the year, dangerous. He could travel by either of two roads. If he made choice of the better road, he had to cross the river Thames, with his horse and buggy, on a flat boat called a scow. Ingress and egress on

the boat and from it were generally difficult and dangerous, according as the river was high or low. In his company I made this transit several times, and remarked to him the danger of the crossing. He told me that he was sensible of the danger, and that this caused him a good deal of anxiety. By choosing the other road he could cross the river by the Wardsville bridge, but had to travel over a very heavy clay road, and in places had to cross deep ravines, where the way on both sides was steep and narrow, and the middle a high bank raised up from the bottom of the ravine. This bank was so narrow at the top that it required great care to drive safely across, there being no fence for protection. On one occasion, during winter, both of us drove by this way from Wardsville to attend a missionary meeting at East Aldboro'. Some time previous there was a thaw, and after it a sharp frost. Each of us had his own cutter. We came to one of these ravines and found the road across it covered with a sheet of ice. The least deviation to either side would have swung the cutter off the narrow bank towards the bottom of the ravine. He being foremost drove on smartly, and I followed with fear and trembling. Under the preserving care of our Heavenly Father, who has the number of the hairs of our heads, we crossed safely. I drew his attention to the danger of driving over such a place. "Yes," he replied, "I have frequently to risk my life in travelling between the two churches, and it worries my mind con-

siderably ; and sometimes I think it injures my health." Both congregations were deeply attached to him, and highly appreciated his labors among them. The Wardsville people became aware of the difficulties of working the two places under one pastor, and proposed a separation. This was finally agreed to by both congregations. Each of them desired to have him as pastor, but Wardsville succeeded in retaining him, and it was then arranged that he would give services at Newbury village, at about three miles distance, with a good plank road between the two places. This arrangement made his travelling much easier, and allowed him more time for reading and study, of which he was always ardently fond. One of his sisters was his house-keeper, and relieved him much from household cares and worries.

A TRIP TO THE OLD COUNTRY.

When at college he never enjoyed robust health. His heavy work, while both Wardsville and East Aldboro' were under his charge must have reduced his physical strength considerably. He often complained to me of loss of energy. He was advised to take a few months' of rest, and he decided on a trip to the Old Country. He carried out his decision and returned home greatly benefitted. In a short period afterwards he gained flesh and strength and remarked to me, that he was never in better health.

A HEBREW READING CLASS.

The manse of Ekfrid was situated about half-way between that of Mosa and Wardsville. The Rev. W. R. Sutherland, minister of Ekfrid and Glencoe, was our intimate companion, and associated with us frequently when we met. In a sense he was our father as well as our brother. He was thirteen or fourteen years our senior in that field, and previous to our time, besides his own charge, including Ekfrid and Mosa, he rendered valuable services in Dunwich, Aldboro', and Wardsville. In this wide field, now including four or five ministerial charges, he was the early pioneer, laboring day and night, travelling over the very worst of roads, in the Master's service. He kept many Presbyterian families from wandering into other denominations; of him, it may be truly said, as of Barnabas of old, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people were added to the Lord." For his numerous labors in sowing "spiritual things," he reaped but little of "carnal things." Our church can never properly estimate or remunerate his services in her cause. He may occupy but a humble place in the church militant, but I am persuaded he will sit high in the church triumphant. At one of our meetings Mr. McKinnon proposed, that we should form ourselves into a class to study Hebrew, meet once a month, in turn, at each manse; and, besides reading five chapters of the Old Testament, ex-

amine each other on the grammar and structure of the language. To Hebrew, we afterwards added Greek and Latin. We kept up this class regularly for five years ; and acquired considerable ease in our translations to English. Besides the immediate work of the class, which was punctually attended to first, other subjects of interest were thoroughly discussed on these occasions, from which we derived much benefit. On removing from Wardsville to Belmont, Mr. McKinnon expressed much regret at having to give up the class.

HIS APPOINTMENT AS A MISSIONARY TO THE NEW
HEBRIDES.

During his early pastorate at Wardsville, the Synod met in Hamilton, and agreed to send a missionary to the New Hebrides. We were both present at the meeting. Dr. McTavish, now of Inverness, Scotland, was a member of the Foreign Mission Committee, and had his eye on Mr. McKinnon for this appointment; and immediately conferred with him, and persuaded him to allow his name to be put on the list of candidates. The Committee's choice fell on him, and he accepted the call. He met me soon afterwards and told me what had taken place, I answered him at once, "I think you have acted too hastily. Have you had the matter long before your mind?" He replied, "Not of late, but at one time, during my college course I had a strong inclination to offer my services for the foreign

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field." I suggested to him several reasons why I thought he might serve the Master in Wardsville as well as in the New Hebrides ; and especially since he was already master of a language, Gælic, very much required then, in many congregations at home, which would be of no use to him as a foreign missionary ; and it would be long before he could acquire a new language to use with equal effect. I found it useless to reason with him. His mind was made up. The Committee submitted their choice that evening to the Synod for approval. We generally sat together in the same seat during the sederunts ; I was beside him, when the Committee reported their choice. Several recommendatory speeches were made, and members were asked by the Moderator to stand on their feet to signify their approval ; I think all present stood up but myself. He asked me afterwards why I did not rise with the rest. I answered him "because I could not approve." The Synod then instructed the Presbytery of London to take the lawful steps to release him from his charge at Wardsville, in consequence of his appointment. A few months elapsed before the Presbytery met to release him. During this interval he was busy making preparations for his departure, and from frequent interviews with him, I felt persuaded that he had no idea of anything arising to avert the decision of the Synod. I dwell more minutely on this point, because I heard it hinted afterwards, by leading men in the church, that he regretted acting so hastily. The

Presbytery decided to hold a meeting at Wardsville to consider the instructions of the Assembly. The congregation offered a strong opposition, and presented strong reasons to the Presbytery for leaving their much esteemed pastor to remain with them. The late Dr. Kemp, then minister of Windsor, and Mr. Scott, of London, (now Dr. Scott), argued in favor of the congregation. When he spoke himself he said that had matters been so clear to his mind when he accepted the Synod's call, as they appeared to him that day, he might *possibly* have decided differently ; but it would place him and the Presbytery in a very awkward position to do anything to reverse the Synod's appointment. I remember Dr. Kemp rising up and saying, "I am willing to defend the Presbytery before the Synod in coming to a decision *not* to release Mr. McKinnon from his present charge." A motion by Mr. Scott, in accordance with the wishes of the congregation, was carried. Mr. McKinnon felt much annoyed at the Presbytery's decision, but submitted to remain with his people, whom he faithfully served a few years longer.

AS A PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

On this point I need not say much—indeed it is difficult to say much, for opinions are so very different, as minds differ. I was with him when he preached his first sermon before a public audience. It was during our early years at college. Dr. Reid asked me to sup-

ply Weston and Humber, two small preaching stations about ten miles west of Toronto. I was instructed to take a horse and buggy from the livery stable and drive out on Sabbath morning and back the same evening. I told Mr. McKinnon of the opportunity; he at once prepared to accompany me, and preach for me at one of the stations, remarking, "I am anxious to break the ice in the way of public preaching." After the services were over, on our way back, we congratulated each other that we succeeded fairly well, though our hearers, probably, had a different impression. I had no opportunity afterwards of hearing him, until after his settlement at Wardsville. No other minister preached more frequently to my people in Mosa at communion seasons and on other occasions, in both languages; and, I think, I was asked to come to his as often as any other, on such occasions. Impressions of his preaching will always remain on my mind. He was a thorough theologian, but seldom discussed intricate points of doctrine from the pulpit. He regarded the capacity of his hearers; he aimed at being simple, clear and correct in language. He gave the full meaning of his text, expressed in familiar words and sentences, and endeavored to send home the truth with earnest, practical remarks. He aimed at the awakening of the conscience and convincing the reason rather than at stirring up the feelings. He regarded conversion as the effect of the Holy Spirit's power, and the preaching of the word as a special means by which the Spirit

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works to produce the effect. Such effect would be permanent. But the impressions and feelings produced by mere melodious singing, and a thundering voice, with emptiness behind them would be vague and transitory.

He always had a modest estimate of his own preaching, especially when compared with the kind of preaching that pleases this fastidious age. He remarked to me, that he could never be a very popular preacher, because of certain defects in his voice and utterance. When McNabb Street Church, Hamilton, became vacant in consequence of Dr. Inglis' appointment to one of the chairs in Knox College, the late Mr. McColl, of the Central Church of that City, being Moderator of the Session, sent him a note asking him to preach as a candidate. Soon after this, I had occasion to visit him, and he showed me the note, saying, "I wrote back to him immediately, declining;" and added with his usual candour, "my reason for doing so was that I felt convinced there was not the shadow of a probability that I would ever receive a call from that congregation." His idea of preaching was: state the truth in plain, simple words to reach the understanding of the hearers, and pray for the Holy Spirit to make it effectual; and if you be the means of converting or of edifying an illiterate rustic or a pauper, the Master will esteem your service as much as if you had done the same to a learned sage or a king."

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toral duties with the same diligence as at Wardsville. While here he made a new departure in life, by taking to himself a sharer in his joys and sorrows. It was generally believed that Mr. McKinnon would never marry, and it was somewhat late in life when he took this step. In the early part of his ministry he often expressed his determination of remaining single. He, however, changed that intention and was led away a willing and glad captive to the hymeneal altar. In one part of his diary we find frequent mention of a Miss McG—. Such statements as these occur : "Met Miss McG—, spent a pleasant evening with her." Again, "Took a trip to London to see Miss McG—," and then, "Wrote to Miss McG—." Finally, "Went to Presbytery, spent the evening with Miss McG—, and settled an important matter." For these vague references we find an interpreting key in the following statement : "On the 24th day of February I was married to Miss Annie McGregor, of London, with whom I now live in love and comfort."

Mrs. McKinnon entered with enthusiastic sympathy into her husband's work and was of great assistance to him in his subsequent labors. Mr. McKinnon adapted himself readily to his new environments, and proved himself a thoughtful and devoted husband, as well as an affectionate father, being strongly attached to his home and family. In his diary are to be found many expressions of tenderness and love towards his wife and children, and of happiness in the enjoyment of their fellowship.

After laboring for more than five years at Belmont, he received an unanimous call from Burns' Church, Mosa. This call he accepted, and was inducted into the pastorate charge of Mosa on May 23rd, 1877. Here he spent the remainder of his life among a people warmly attached to him and of whom he often writes in the most kindly terms. He makes frequent mention of the generosity and kindness of his people, and repeatedly refers to the faithfulness and promptness of his deacons. On Christmas Day, 1880, he writes : "Christmas Day—We are all well ; we have peace ; we have a large share of the common blessings and comforts of life. The people are very kind, they have been indeed loading us with kindness, filling our larder till we have more than we can use for a long time. Yet we are sinful, erring, full of short-comings. Oh, Lord ! forgive our sins, mine and my wife's, and my children's. Forgive, oh, Lord ! and accept our thanks for all Thy goodness. May Thy goodness lead us to repentance and not to hardness of heart. Many privileges have been conferred upon us since Christmas Day a year ago, for which we owe hearty thanks to our God."

Again he writes : "The deacons are very prompt and the people are very kind. I have great reason to be thankful to God for the kindness of the people. Lord, bless them, save them."

On the last day of the last year of his life he writes : "The new year is drawing nigh. Lord, I thank

Thy great name for Thy kindness to me and mine during the year that is about to close. We have had reasons for anxiety, we have had afflictions, but we have had a large measure of health and comfort. We have enjoyed the favor of God, and we have received kindness from our dear God and kind people. The congregation have shown great heartiness ; the meetings have been well attended ; the stipend has been promptly paid ; they have made me a present of a beautiful animal for my use in travelling up and down among them. They were extremely kind during our season of affliction. When I was sick myself, they offered to let me cease preaching for some Sabbaths, and at the same time, my dear wife, the mother of my children, being sick, one of the women of the congregation sat up every night with her till we could wait upon her ourselves. Oh, Lord ! I wish at the closing of the year to renew my profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and my acceptance of Thy covenant and my resolution to serve Thee in the kingdom of Thy Son. Oh, God ! I praise and thank Thy holy name, continue Thy blessings and enable me to enter upon the New Year with a proper spirit as a minister of the Gospel of Christ Jesus." There are many such references to the kindness of his people bearing witness to the esteem in which he was held by all, a testimony to the beautiful harmony existing between him and his flock. His preaching was enjoyed by all who had the privilege of his ministrations. The style and method of

preaching which he aimed at may be determined by reading a few of his reflections and criticisms on this subject. While a student he writes :

" In the Sabbath School the time was taken up with expounding passages and pointing out doctrines which they established, without having made an attempt to appeal to the heart and applying the passages to practical life. I would be in favor of more application than is generally made by teachers and preachers. Oh ! may the Lord direct me in my feeble attempts to be useful, to do what will be most conducive to the advancement of His own honor and the good of souls. May I be instrumental in directing the youth of this neighborhood to Jesus, the great and the all-sufficient Saviour."

While in Scotland he went to hear a Gaelic preacher and says of him :

" The preacher used the general term *church* frequently. It occurred to me that this style of preaching blunts the edge of the truth, for the peoples' feelings and consciences. It were better to speak of the individual soul, to speak of a concrete and particular thing."

On the evening of the same day he heard another minister, of whom he says :

" He told us of a picture of a cross, which he had seen some time ago. A hand was grasping it. Below was the Latin inscription, '*Teneo teneorque.*' This was to illustrate the believer's safety in Christ. It oc-

curred to me that if I had been originating that legend I should have reversed the words and said, '*Teneor teneoque*,' 'I am held and I hold.'

He was, however, sparing in his criticisms of the methods of others who were striving to serve the Master in ways different from his own. We search in vain throughout his diary for a single unkind reflection upon any who are endeavoring to work for Christ. He does not indulge in denunciations, but rejoices in Christ being preached. His was not a small, narrow, cynical, selfish soul, not a warped judgment. He reflected the spirit of the Master, when he said, "There is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me." He looked upon the work done for Christ from the high stand-point of the Apostle Paul, who said, "What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

He says of what he saw on the wharf in Greenock:

"A blind man was reading the Scriptures to such as would listen to him ; he read in Colossians, and he could do it pretty well. It was a comfort for me to find this man thus engaged. I saw also an agent of the "National Bible Society," similarly engaged, on the previous day, on the show-ground. Satan has many of his agents busy on such public occasions, and it were a sad thing if none of the agents of Christianity embraced similar opportunities. May the Lord bless His

own word and His own cause, and hasten the happy period when all shall know Him."

He had a great dislike for Sunday funerals, a practice of which he bitterly complains :

"Preached at the funeral of —, although I hate and oppose funerals on Sunday. I trust the Lord will forgive me for so far yielding to the people's desire to have funerals on Sunday. They say there was a necessity for it, but I could not see the ground of the necessity. I am perplexed and annoyed by this affair, and what should be my definite course and my firm resolution I know not."

Of another Sunday funeral he writes :

"Mr. — called to tell me — died, and that they had resolved to have the funeral to-morrow (Sunday). I objected, and Mr. — being present, warned him against doing what God did not approve of. At the close of the service on Sabbath I spoke to the people, and told them that they should be conscientious in judging of reasons for burying on Sunday. I said that we would meet with the friends to-day and deal kindly with them in their sorrow, but that I hoped they would consider the commandment requiring the Sabbath to be kept holy. I cited the example of the women in connection with the burial of Jesus Christ. They saw Him put into the tomb, went home, prepared spices and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment."

Mr. McKinnon was strictly temperate and very

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careful in his habits. He went to God's house under a deep sense of the solemnity of his work, and endeavored by word and example to beget a spirit of reverence for divine things in those who heard him. Nothing pained him more than to witness a display of irreverence or levity in the place of public worship. Of this he writes :

" Humbled myself before God and kept a fast. I took a review of my sins which are many and heinous ; sought to be affected in view of them, to repent, to make confession to God, to ask pardon and to renew my covenant with Him. I prayed for a blessing on my ministry ; confessed the ungodliness of the people ; was particularly distressed on account of their rudeness in the house of God yesterday, when I could distinctly hear them spouting tobacco-juice during prayer. Oh, God, may it please Thee never to let me hear such coarseness in Thy house again. I was pained and distressed."

He, in common with all who work for the higher good of man, felt the terrible counteracting power of the liquor traffic. He writes :

" Poor, old, depraved — came and stayed all night. He was drunk, and I think he had whiskey with him in his satchel. Oh, what a sad spectacle he is ! He is well connected, but he is a wreck. Lord, have mercy on him, and bring him to himself and save him."

Of this man he writes again :

Biographical Sketch.

"What a sad end! He died alone in a barn; a melancholy end to a dark and dissipated life. His people, it is said, are respectable. I had sad musings over the event as I travelled on my way home. I felt pleased that we kept him, and were kind to him when he stayed a night with us a few weeks ago. I wondered whether it were possible for him to have been saved. The inquiry looked dark. I felt willing to leave it for a more pleasant topic."

Of another victim he writes:

"A straggler rapped at the door when we were at prayer. He was drunk and silly. We had to keep him all night, and on his account did not get to bed till one o'clock. Alas, what an agent for demoralizing man is whiskey! It makes men shameless, degraded, profane."

The office of the ministry possessed for him a dignity, privileges, and obligations of the highest and most solemn character. He felt that his was no mean calling. To him, as to all faithful ministers, it was a privilege of the highest order to be accounted worthy to be made a minister.

During his first college vacation he says:

"By a conversation in the family I was led to think of the awful responsibility of those who become ministers of the Gospel. Oh, may the Lord give me that preparation that comes from Himself alone, if so be I shall succeed in getting into the ministry."

After being in the ministry for eighteen years he says:

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" This is the eighteenth anniversary of my ordination.

" Now blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel ;
For He alone doth wondrous works,
In glory that excel.'

" He has given me many tokens of His kindness and mercy during those eighteen years of my ministry. Although I have had many ups and downs, and have been unworthy and sinful, yet the Lord has preserved me. He has not cast me off. He will still keep me and not cast me away. I can adopt the language of the Psalmist when he says :

" I love the Lord, because my voice
And prayers He did hear.
I, while I live, will call on Him,
Who bow'd to me His ear.'

" Yes, blessed be His Name. I am not free from trouble and anxiety, but in God is my trust and confidence. He will not forsake me. My times are in His hand. He will order and arrange for me. Glory be to His great and holy name."

On another occasion he writes in regard to his work :

" I must be busy with my preparation for to-morrow. Oh, that the Lord would enable me to preach so as to be successful in winning souls to Christ. I do it so poorly that at times I am afraid I should never have been in the ministry, but then I know that

the treasure is in earthen vessels that the excellency may be of God and not of us."

Mr. McKinnon was a warm, generous friend. In different parts of his diary we find expressions of kind sympathy and good wishes for young men when entering upon their public duties as ministers of the Gospel. He offered many prayers for the success of his brethren. Reference has already been made to his intimate and kind friend, Mr. Stewart. Of him, after his removal to another Presbytery, he says :

" Attended a meeting of Presbytery ; missed the familiar face of my old friend, Mr. Stewart."

Of another friend he says :

" A letter from Mr. Scott ; very kind. A sweet Christian, he has been and he is. The old members of Presbytery are nearly all removed. Only Dr. Proudfoot and myself left of the membership of 1861."

Again :

" In the evening the *Presbyterian* came, bearing the tidings of the death of the Rev. John Ross, of Brucefield. John, an honest, earnest soul ; I loved him, and even after the conflict I had with him at Williams, I held him in great esteem and respect. He has gone to his rest, I trust. He has left a wife and young children to mourn his death."

In hours of sorrow, darkness and death his presence brought comfort and hope. He wept with those who wept ; he directed the faltering faith to lay hold upon the gracious and sympathetic Redeemer. He

records an affecting death-bed experience he had before leaving Scotland, when there in 1871 :

"I found Mary more restless than usual, but did not at all anticipate that her end was so near. She spoke of the prospect of my sailing, and seemed to be quite distressed and sorrowful at the idea of it. She said to me : 'You are going away to-morrow evening, or will it be on Tuesday?' I said, 'on Tuesday.' 'Can you not stay and watch with me to-night?' she said. I said, 'I can do that for I do not need to go away until to-morrow morning.' 'If I were strong,' she said, 'I would go out in the tug and see you off, but I am not strong, I cannot do that.' At one time she said to me, 'Now tell me something about the Highlands.' But immediately checking herself, she said, 'But, oh ! my morning thought should not be on anything but Jesus.' 'Jesus will be kind to you,' I remarked. 'Yes,' she said, 'He is kind to me as it is.' She then sent for her mother, and made her bring a little broach, which belonged to herself, and gave it to me to put a lock of her hair, and another of her mother's, twisted together in it, and requested that I should sometimes put it in my neck-tie. Soon after we saw that her end must be drawing near. She spoke several times of one 'Mary,' whom we ascertained to be a girl that used to be much with her when they were little ones. She said of her : 'She used to be careless, and I am afraid that she is careless still.' She then asked her mother to advise her to seek the

Lord. She prayed the Lord to give her rest, and, if not, to enable her to be content. She prayed and said, 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.' Her mother suggested that we should kneel and pray. We did so. She caught words of the prayer and repeated them after us. She dwelt on the words: 'I shall see the King in His beauty. Oh! I see Him now; there He is.' At this time her eyes were closed. We rose from our knees. I raised her up, when her head drooped more death-like than I noticed it before. Her mother hurried me to lay her down again. I did so. After this her breathing was slow and easy. Her mother knelt again, and I stood looking on. Seeing premonitions of death, I touched her mother and raised her up; and while we looked on in silent sadness, the breathing became rapid, and, at last, quietly ceased. There was no struggle, no spasm. She sank peacefully asleep in Jesus. The sweet spirit took its flight, and left us to gaze on its tenement of clay. Oh, her poor mother! For her it was a sad night, yet there were consoling ingredients in her cup of sorrow. How consoling was the hope concerning Mary! She had fallen asleep in the arms of a kind Saviour. Blessed sleep! She shall awake again, and, meanwhile, she is happy with Christ in whatever intermediate state He has provided for His own."

They are hallowed moments in the life of every Christian when he holds intercourse with the saints of God, just before they pass to the world of spirits, to

be with the Redeemer. To see the weary traveller, after his perilous journey and his rescue from destruction, about to take his flight to his eternal home, is a solemn spectacle. These are refreshing scenes to the minister of Christ. At no time does he so fully realize the joy of being a co-worker with Christ, as when he points the storm-tossed pilgrim to the restful home beyond the floods, to the light beyond the shadows ; at no time does the world, with its ambitions, personalities and self-assertions, appear so insignificant and unreal ; at no time are the things which are not seen and eternal so real and present to the soul. Standing in the presence of death, we feel our kinship with the race. All earthly distinctions disappear, and that heart is cold that can withhold its sympathy from those whose heads are bowed in sorrow. During the last few years of his ministry, there was an unusually large number of deaths in Mr. McKinnon's congregation ; many of the old pioneers of the settlement passed away. This brought him into very close contact with many of the homes of his people, and his words of comfort and encouragement in the hour of sorrow and anxiety will not soon be forgotten in their households.

In the midst of his manifold duties as a minister, he did not forget the claims of kindred and family. He took a deep interest in the temporal and spiritual prosperity of his kinsmen according to the flesh. To the well-being of his parents, his brothers and sisters, he was never indifferent. At all times he showed to

them a son's devotion and a brother's loyalty and affection. Time and again we find in his journal instances of the kind care and substantial assistance he bestowed upon his widowed sister and her orphan children, who will ever hold his memory in loving esteem. During his college days, he expresses his solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the other members of the family :

" I feel much concern for the salvation of father and mother, brothers and sisters. May the Lord give me faith in interceding for them."

Later he writes :

" I have just received letters containing the tidings for which I so often prayed, that God might visit my father's house with the Gospel of His Son. I earnestly pray God, for Christ's sake, that the work of conviction, which has been commenced in the souls of my dear sisters, may be consummated in their conversion and union to Jesus Christ by saving faith."

As we have already seen, he was tenderly attached to his wife and family. His journal abounds with prayers in their behalf :

" Oh, Lord, I thank Thee for the growth and healthfulness of my children. Lord, bless them ; give them growth and health and every blessing. Put Thy Spirit in them. They are in Thy covenant. Oh, save them, and make them useful ! Will it please Thee to make my boy an able minister of the New Testament."

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Again: "This is the fifth anniversary of my marriage. We are comfortable and in health. We have sinned, but we are still spared. The Lord be merciful and kind to us; make us more careful, more content, more holy. Oh, Lord, bless us, and bless our little ones, and my sister's children, who are with us, and my people, and all our friends and relatives."

In the midst of domestic, social and public affairs, in seasons of sorrow and of joy, he had a keen sense of the immanence of God in all things. He ever lived as in "his great Task-master's eye." He made a habit of looking at all things, and of considering all events in relation to Him who created and rules over all. The universe was to him a vast sanctuary, a magnificent temple for the worship of the Eternal. He was at church all the time. All places, all times were to him sacred. After witnessing an eclipse of the sun, he says :

"Had a fine view of an eclipse of the sun to-day. Oh, may I be under the protection of Him who has established the laws of the heavenly bodies, that He may write His holy laws in my heart and enable me to observe them in my conduct."

Again: "My heart is sore, my brain is hot. My eye lighted on a passage in the Bible which relieved me considerably. A rest remaineth for Thy people, oh Lord. I look out at the trees and know that God reigneth, and remember that the world is a speck in the universe."

The reverence he attached to God's house and worship has already been noticed. To him the ordinances of the sanctuary were most sacred, and regarded by him as blessed and strengthening influences. He writes in reference to a communion service, in which he participated during his college days :

" This day was observed as a day of humiliation in prospect of celebrating the Supper of the Lord. Besides attending public worship I spent a great part of the day in reading the 'Confession of Faith,' and other religious books. I find a curious kind of quietness in my mind. I cannot say that it arises from any great seriousness of mind or peculiarly bright views of Christ lately enjoyed, but as it were from a settling of my mind after a season of alarm, into a state of security. My faith seems to be of such a kind that it produces peace, although it is not so productive of seriousness and good words and works as I should wish. I pray God that my faith may be of the genuine kind, 'a resting on the Lord for salvation,' 'a looking unto Jesus,' 'union to Him that died that my soul might have everlasting life.' In the prospect of commemorating my Saviour's dying love, I pray that I may be enabled, by the influence of His Holy Spirit to discern His body, to feed upon Him for my spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Since last I took the symbolic cup of salvation, many have been my mercies and enjoyments and comparatively few have been my troubles. ' Bless the Lord, O my soul and let all that

is within me bless and magnify His holy name,' for the Lord is very good to me. But, alas ! good as He has been to me, I have sinned against Him, often and that wickedly. Oh, that He would give me grace to do His will and to walk in the ways of His commandments all the days of my life. Oh, that Christ would take me to His banqueting house and that His banner over me may be love. May the north wind blow and the south wind come that they may blow upon the garden of my soul, that the spices thereof may flow forth and that my Beloved may come to His garden and eat His pleasant fruit. May the Lord shower down upon me the dews of heaven to revive and invigorate the drooping plant of love and the almost withering plant of zeal."

On Monday, he continues :

" Yesterday I took the emblems of my Saviour's broken body and shed blood, by which I renewed my engagement to be the Lord's. But oh, how prone I am to forget my relation to my Redeemer. Even last night I engaged in conversation that now grieves me. Would that I could always keep in mind, that God watches over me and takes notice of all my thoughts, words and actions."

After preaching for eighteen years, he writes :

" In the afternoon I baptized —. In my remarks prefacing the ordinance, I called attention to the simplicity of the action and symbols: there being scarcely a day when one does not wash, and eat and drink.

There is nothing difficult in the action, nor perplexing in the symbols which Jesus has appointed in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. How can we, then, explain the neglect and the indifference wherewith many treat these ordinances, but by the belief, that they neither believe in Christ nor love Him, and that therefore, they have the conviction that they have no part nor lot with Him? Oh, poor careless souls that have neither been baptized nor partaken of the Lord's Supper! Where will such persons appear when Christ will come and when God will gather to Himself all that have made covenant with Him, by sacrifice?"

For a considerable time before his death symptoms of the disease which proved fatal to him, manifested themselves. On August 7th, 1886, he writes :

"I had a strange sensation when I was putting on my clothes this morning. I felt as if something had taken hold of my brain and nervous system and given it a horizontal slight swing around. I had a similar experience once or twice, some time ago."

November 11th, 1887: "I had a nausea all day and towards evening I began to stagger."

December 26th, 1887: "Cool my blood and brain, O Lord. Help me to cast my burden upon Thee and to be careful and over-anxious for nothing, but by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make my requests known to the Lord. I make them known to Thee, O Lord. I have from time to time done so. I am sore and distressed. My heart has

been subject to great strains. Perhaps I should not say it has been breaking. But I hope and trust it has been contrite in the scriptural sense. A horror at times falls upon me and my heart is overwhelmed. Give Thou me strength of heart and composure of spirit. 'Leave me not nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.' I come to Thee in the midst of all my imperfections. If I perish, I perish at Thy door, and I shall be driven from Thy presence. Conserve my reason ; make me not a laughing-stock of the foolish ; let not iniquity have dominion over me. Drive the devil and his host of darkness from me and from my house this night, O Lord ! My children are in Thy covenant ; Thy name has been named upon them. Lend Thy Holy Spirit to enlighten, soften, convert and renew them. Restraine their wandering imaginations ; curb their evil tempers ; give them sense, wisdom and piety."

We find from this extract, and other kindred passages in his diary, that he had hours of despondency and great anxiety. He knew the danger of the disease which was threatening him. This caused him anxious thoughts for his wife and young family. Often he had the experience of the Psalmist when he says : "Out of the depths to Thee I cried." But whenever he thought death to be near him, he did not fear. He knew Whom he had believed. Of a severe sickness he had at Belmont, on April 1st, 1884, he says :

"Lay all day yesterday in great agony. In the

afternoon the doctor was called, and I have improved fast under his care. All praise and thanks be to the Lord. I was willing, and even anxious to go, and be with Jesus, free from the temptations, troubles and calamities of this world. But the Lord has seen proper to spare me a little longer. Oh, that He would give me grace to serve Him and glorify His holy name!"

On Monday morning, Feb. 6th, 1888, he made his last entry in his journal :

"A bright, nice morning. I am writing letters to Mary and young McLean, and a card to J. S. Henderson."

On the following morning, Feb. 7th, he was cheerful, and was attending to his duties, as usual when all at once he began to talk incoherently, and very soon ceased speaking, became unconscious, and, in a few hours, passed away. He died of apoplexy.

His funeral was largely attended by sorrowing friends, and a number of the members of Presbytery. The Rev. W. S. Ball, of Vanneck, being Moderator of Presbytery, officiated. After service, the vast congregation were permitted to view the remains of their sainted pastor. His face bore a calm, peaceful, and almost smiling aspect. Many put their hands on the cold brow, and numbers, with fond affection, kissed the silent lips that had uttered so many words of comfort and encouragement. He was laid in the cemetery at Kilmartin, to await the summons of the resurrection morning.

Mr. McKinnon was well known and highly respected throughout the Presbyterian church. He was faithful in his attendance at the church courts, and when he spoke, was listened to with deference. Judicious, cautious, endowed with intellectual gifts of a high order, his companionship was instructive and entertaining. Now that we have come in contact with the hidden part of his life contained in his journal, he has not suffered in our esteem. His reminiscences do him honor, and testify to his frankness and genuine piety. Not a trace of envy, unkindness or jealousy can be discovered in anything he has written. On the contrary, his large sympathy, his charitable regard for the weaknesses of others is marked. In these pages we have allowed him to speak for himself. To many who knew him, we believe the words of their old pastor will recall the noble and loving spirit of him they honored in life. Though dead, he will continue to speak to them. To those who did not know him his words cannot fail to show how close to God man may live while in his earthly tabernacle. His citizenship was in heaven. Deeply attached to his Saviour, he took pleasure in preaching Him to his fellow-men. He died at his post. The Sabbath before his death he is said to have spoken with unusual energy. His death was what he himself would call a beautiful one. After hearing of the death of the Rev. Mr. Baird, of Port Stanley, he wrote :

“Was at meeting of Presbytery when I learned

that Mr. Baird had died on Sabbath, about 5 p.m. He had preached in the morning, and was sitting down to tea when the call came for him to depart. Beautiful death! Almost out of the pulpit into the kingdom."

He left behind him a widow with a young family of four boys and four girls. To them he has bequeathed the beautiful legacy of a stainless, irreproachable name. To them, the memory of the sainted dead will be a continuous invitation to search for the "One thing needful."

Those who listened to his earnest appeals, and to his words of encouragement, will be fortified as they unite with these the unsullied character of him who spake. And, on the great day of account, may we not cherish the hope of seeing him again, surrounded by many to whom he preached "the Glad Tidings," and whom he constrained to walk in the path that leads to mansions of glory.

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DISCOURSES

ON SOME OF THE

PARABLES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

DISCOURSE I.

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

Luke vi. 39: "And he spake a parable unto them: Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

THERE is an analogy between natural and spiritual things, on account of which natural things may be used to illustrate spiritual things. On this circumstance all figurative language—similes, metaphors, parables, and allegories—is founded.

This method of teaching occurs frequently both in the Old and in the New Testaments. It was used largely by the ancient prophets. Of all the writers of the Old Testament, Ezekiel and Zechariah are the greatest writers of parables, and they press all departments of nature under tribute—sea, earth, sky, sun, moon, stars, winds, trees, etc.—and they found on them parables and metaphors, to illustrate spiritual matters and subjects of prophecy. But it was Jesus

Christ our Lord that carried this method of teaching to the highest state of perfection. His parables are a very important part of the Gospel literature. From nature and from history, and from the customs and practices of daily life, He gathered figures and analogies, and framed parables whereby He illustrated His doctrines, and warnings, and admonitions.

In my text He sets forth the ruinous character of erroneous teaching in religious matters, in a light which at once brings conviction and warning to the understanding. "And he spake a parable unto them : Can the blind lead the blind ? shall they not both fall into the ditch." The teachers specially aimed at were the Scribes and the Pharisees. But what was true of them and their teaching, is also true of all teachers and teaching of the same class, in all ages and in all countries.

In attempting to expound and develop this parable, I make observations as follows :

I. **OBSERVATION :** Blindness is a privation that is frequently used in the Scriptures to illustrate the state in which men are by nature, in respect to spiritual and divine things. By nature men are blind, and cannot see the things of God and of religion ; their understandings are darkened ; their spiritual vision has been injured ; and although light has come into the world, alas ! in many instances, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil," and also be-

cause they are blind and cannot see the light; for Paul tells us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," that it "is not subject to the law of God," that it "cannot indeed be so," and that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

II. OBSERVATION: Although men are thus by nature blind as to spiritual things, yet many turn their attention to spiritual things with nothing to guide them but natural reason; and possessing natural gifts and acquirements which raise them above others, they assume towards them the attitude and the relations of teachers. In such cases—as might indeed be expected, and as my text forcibly illustrates—the result is, that these teachers, being blind and ignorant themselves, lead astray their pupils, and both they and their followers fall into the pit of disappointment and ruin.

If a blind man attempts to lead another blind man through a country that is full of pits and precipices, what can be expected but that they will both fall into some hole or go over some beetling precipice. Nothing else, surely, can be expected; that would be the natural consequence of such an undertaking. Imagine that you saw them starting off on their perilous journey. For a while they seem to get along safely, and they round several pitfalls without a stumble; but by and by, finding themselves on smooth and level

ground which, neither by its sound nor by its surface, gives any indication that danger is near, they confidently proceed, while a precipice which they are nearing is nigh at hand. They are thrown off their former guardedness, and, entering freely and familiarly into conversation about some distant friend, they walk rapidly forward towards the cliff that hangs over a yawning gulf. They see no danger; they hear no warning sound; they are blind; yet they draw nearer and nearer to the mouth of the fatal gulf. Alas! can no friendly voice reach them before they take the fatal step? A few steps more, and the leader's staff has slipped away from his fingers, and by no effort can he hold himself and his companion back; they have lifted their feet to take the step—they have lost their balance; and down they fall, to be torn, and bruised, and mangled by the jagged rocks, as they tumble to the bottom of the gulf below.

Now this is an apt illustration of the natural consequences of an attempt by a man who is yet himself spiritually blind, to communicate religious instruction to another blind sinner. The disciple cannot go beyond his master; if the master does not know the path of safety, the disciple cannot find it out while he is under that master's instruction. While the disciple yields himself up to the master for guidance and for instruction, the only perfection which he can attain to is to be like his master.

III. OBSERVATION: The intelligence, conscience and reason of men may be in vigorous exercise, and yet be blind towards spiritual and divine things; yea, they may be directed to these things, and at the same time remain blind and only lead astray. In this respect the illustration used in my text is exactly to the point. The blind may have all other senses and faculties in full exercise and use, except the sense of sight. In this both the leader and the person whom he leads are supposed to be defective. They do not see the objects that surround them. They can hear, smell and walk, they can talk and they can handle things, but they cannot see. And this defect alone makes their attempt at performing a journey fatal to them. They rise, they lay hold on each other's hands, and they set forward in the right direction; but they do not see, and consequently when they approach a pit or precipice, they do not perceive it till they have taken the fatal step, when down they go—to be much injured or to meet with irretrievable ruin.

Such was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees. They were blind. Their erroneous traditional teaching was a mistake and a delusion. In their attempts to guide the people they were like the blind leading the blind.

And the same is true of all erroneous teaching to this very day. If a blind teacher leads a blind disciple, they shall both fall into the ditch. This is what Jesus teaches. And yet there are many who profess to value

the truth, that are not ready to accept His judgment in this matter. For instance, I have heard people say that they could scarcely believe that those that are led astray by the teaching of the priests of the Church of Rome shall be lost, although they had no doubt that the priests themselves shall fall into the ditch and perish. Those poor people, they say, are deluded by their guides: let the blind guides suffer, say they; but why should those that are led astray by them suffer? Such reasoning may appear to natural taste and natural feelings to be correct and legitimate, but it is not in harmony with the words of Jesus; He says, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

From this subject let us learn the following doctrinal lessons:

First.—It is a solemn thing to be a religious teacher. Those that undertake the work of the Gospel ministry assume a solemn responsibility. They should, therefore, seriously consider their position and their qualifications. If they are unenlightened and blind, they not only put their own souls in danger, but also the souls of those who take them as their spiritual guides. It will be a terrible thing for a man to perish and lose his own soul, in consequence of being blind in regard to spiritual matters, to perish after being confident that he had light and knew the way of peace and safety, and was travelling upon it. What a sore

disappointment for him it will be to find himself in the pit at the very time when he was thinking that he was not far from the city of light and love ; to find himself among fiends and devils, when he was expecting to arrive at the abode of angels. His will then be surely a heartrending and mortifying experience. But it will, doubtless, enhance his sorrow and increase his anguish to find that, by his blindness and presumption, he had led others also astray, and brought them into the pit of ruin. No man that has any degree of sense, or kindness, or reason left in him, would like to be the means of keeping others in dangerous error. It would be a very fiendish despotism that would make a man willing to be the blind teacher, causing others to fall into the ditch, although he himself might escape it. Even in hell men do not all become fiendish, if we may judge from the case of the rich man, who besought Abraham to send Lazarus into his father's house, that his brothers being warned, they might not go into that dreadful place in which he was tormented, and in which he could not get even a drop of water to quench his parched tongue. How solemn, then, is the responsibility of a religious teacher ! and how careful and anxious should all religious teachers be lest they be blind leaders of the blind, and bring not only themselves but their pupils into the pit of ruin ?

Second.—From this parable learn that it is a solemn thing to be a learner of religious and spiritual

things; in other words, learn how anxious all should be that those who go before them in spiritual things and are their guides, be men of grace and of sufficient enlightenment to make them able ministers of the New Testament, "rightly dividing the word of life." With what care and circumspection should Presbyteries guard the entrance to the Gospel ministry, and take pains to ascertain the attainments and graces of those who come before them for license to preach the Gospel, lest, by their carelessness and indifference, they admit to the pastoral office those who would, in that sacred office, be only blind leaders of the blind. And again, with what prayerfulness and caution should sessions and congregations proceed in selecting and calling a preacher of the Gospel to be their guide in spiritual things. One can scarcely conceive a greater calamity happening to a people than that an ungodly and blind teacher should become their pastor. What can such a man do but attempt to lead others in the way in which he is not going himself, and to guide others to pastures in which he himself has never been fed? It has been regarded by serious and godly men as a severe judgment of God on a people that they should have only worldly, vicious and ungodly men as their spiritual guides. And wherever the whole or the majority of a nation's religious teachers have become blind guides, leaving the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ to wander in moral and spiritual speculations, drawn from human reason, or founded on real or sup-

posed discoveries of philosophy or science, then political blunders and the decay of public morality will be the forerunners of national disasters or national decay.

In conclusion, let me repeat these thoughts :—
(a) That it is a solemn thing to be a teacher in the matter of religion. Those that undertake such work should consider well their state and their qualifications. It will be a terrible thing to lead souls to ruin—to be like a blind man leading another blind man, till both fall into the ditch. (b) Learn that it is also a solemn thing to be a learner of spiritual things. No man should give up his understanding in this matter to the judgment of any human being. People should exercise their own understanding, read the Word of God for themselves, and see whether the things which they hear are in accordance with the divine standard of truth. The Bereans were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in “that they searched the Scriptures daily” to see whether the things which the Apostles preached to them “were so.” (Acts xvii. 11.) So ought Gospel hearers to do now. (c) Learn further that the safe way is, to take Jesus for your leader, and men only as helps to enable you to understand His mind. Jesus is the Great Teacher—learn of Him ; He is the only true guide. *... will not lead you astray.*

DISCOURSE II.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH BUILDERS.

Matt. vii: 21-27; see also Luke vi: 47-49; Ps. iii: 1-4; Ps. iii: 6; Ps. cxix: 57.

THE phrase "that day," in the 22nd verse certainly means the great day of judgment. That day will be a great day indeed, a solemn and an important day. It is not specifically named here, but simply alluded to; but the context leaves no room for doubting what day is meant.

We are here to prepare for that great and solemn day, in which our destinies for weal or for woe, for eternity, shall be finally settled. And certainly, great is the folly of the man who either neglects or refuses to make the necessary preparation for that day, that he may not be found in the number of those, on whom the awful sentence shall be pronounced: "Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv: 41), but that he may stand on the right hand of the Judge with the redeemed and hear the joyous sentence pronounced on himself and them, "Come ye blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv: 34). And, if here, the question be asked, Wherein does the proper prepara-

tion for that day consist? I would reply shortly in the spirit and tenor of my text, In believing the words of Jesus Christ, and in doing the will of God. Nothing else can be a proper and satisfactory preparation.

There will be searching work done on that day. No deception can then be practised on the Judge; His omniscience fully qualifies Him for guarding Himself against all deception. He will bring "hidden things to light." What has been done here "in secret," shall be proclaimed as "on the housetops." No darkness can cover from His eyes; for to Him "the darkness and the light are both alike," for He is the omniscient One. "His eyes are everywhere, beholding the evil and the good. Nothing can be hidden from His all seeing eyes.

All who despise Christ and His Gospel, shall surely be in a sad case on that day. The openly irreligious and profane shall perish. "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. ix: 17). No hope can be entertained of those that disobey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that are manifestly impenitent and unbelieving. If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Pet. iv: 18.

"In judgment, therefore, shall not stand
Such as ungodly are:
Nor in the assembly of the just,
Shall wicked men appear."

But the sharp words of my text are not directed

against those that are manifestly or professedly impenitent and unbelieving, so much as against those that deceive themselves with a name to live and are the professed followers of Jesus Christ, while they are dead in trespasses and in sins. The subject of the whole passage is briefly stated in the 21st verse " Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." The rest of the passage is an illustration and explanation of these statements. In these statements two classes are described and their destinies foretold. One class say to Jesus, " Lord, Lord," but they do not the will of His Father in heaven,—these shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ; the other class not only call Jesus " Lord, Lord," but they also do the will of His Father in heaven ; and these are the people that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Let us meditate upon these classes and their respective destinies, as they are here described.

1. One class do the will of the Father in heaven : this is expressly stated regarding them ; while it is also implied in the structure of the words, that they call Jesus, " Lord, Lord," that is, they believe and acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners.

Now, you will observe, that the character of these is illustrated by a beautiful comparison. Every one of these is likened to "a wise man who built his house

upon a rock." In the Gospel according to Luke the comparison is thus stated, " Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like : He is like a man which built an house and digged deep and laid the foundation upon a rock " ; and in the words before us, you see the language used is the following : " Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock."

Observe, now, that this illustrating comparison commends this class of persons for their wisdom. They are wise. This is the element in their character that makes them resemble the man who built his house upon a rock. This man acted with wisdom, fore-thought, prudence and precaution. He digged deep and laid the foundation of his house upon the rock ; and although it is not stated, yet it is fairly implied, that he afterwards built his house carefully and of proper materials. In this wise man, therefore, we have a picture or figure true of believers. They are wise in connection with spiritual things and the eternal prospects of their never dying souls. They will not be satisfied with a state in which their future prospects are doubtful or insecure ; but they will use every means, and put forth every legitimate effort, to make good their interest in Christ and their prospects for another world.

The wisdom of this class of people includes two elements : *First*, they hear the words of Christ. Luke

says, they come unto Him and hear His words. They do not lean on their own understandings, but they take Christ Jesus to be their teacher. They hear Him; they learn of Him; He is their great prophet. This is the first element in their wisdom. And then, *secondly*, they do Christ's commandments. The words by which Christ expresses this element in the wisdom of this class are these: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them." And by comparing these words with the words of verse 21, we see that "doing the sayings of Christ," and "doing the will of God the Father," are equivalent expressions.

True believers then hear the sayings of Christ and do them. They couple doing with hearing. Their religion is not a system of doctrines that have no connection with, nor influence upon, their lives; but their religion is a system of doctrines and precepts that regulate their doings. They hear the sayings of Jesus, and they do them. They "obey the Gospel," they "do the will of God." And in this element of doing they are different from those that are satisfied with a name to live, while they are dead in trespasses and sins.

Such, then, is the character of true believers; and, in accordance with their character, their destiny is to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And it shall be a blessed destiny. On the great day of reckoning, they shall be acknowledged as Christ's true followers, and welcomed into the joy of their Lord. An inherit-

ance has been prepared for them, and they shall be put in possession of it.

The same thing is meant by the words in the accompanying illustration, only that there it is put in a negative form of expression, as follows: "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." The wise builder's house was well founded upon a rock, and when the commotion of the elements put it to a severe test, it fell not, but stood firm, and protected those that dwelt therein. In like manner, will the hope of him who both heareth the sayings of Jesus and doeth them, bear the test and sustain the trial which shall be brought to bear upon it; he shall be found worthy to escape the things that shall come upon the world; and his hope shall not make him ashamed, "because the love of God has been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost." Rom. v : 5.

So much for the character and the destiny of the one class here mentioned.

II. CONSIDER THE CHARACTER AND DESTINY OF THE OTHER CLASS.

And *first*, their character; they are foolish. They are like "a foolish man who built his house upon the sand." But, although they are foolish in the most important points, they resemble the wise in several

things. First, they resemble them in that they hear the words of Christ ; they are not heathen. It is not of those to whom the Gospel has never gone that my text speaks, but of those who, in Christian lands, and in other lands where the Gospel is preached, have heard the words of Christ. Again, *secondly*, they resemble the wise in that they call Christ, " Lord, Lord." They call Him Lord now, during their pilgrimage in this world, and in the day of judgment they will call Him by the same title. They are professors of religion ; they profess faith in Jesus Christ and attachment to Him ; they call Him, " Lord, Lord." And not only do they call Him Lord, but, *thirdly*, many of them will be able to say in the day of judgment, " Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done wonderful works ? " They shall be able to show that they were not only professors of religion, but also prominent persons in the church on earth.

" Prophesying," and " casting out devils," and " doing wonderful works"—in these consisted the great works of the leaders of the church in apostolic times. These were the blessings which the teachers of Christianity were the instruments of securing in those days ; and the works which correspond with them in modern times are, the preaching of the Gospel, the defence of the truth, the awakening of the careless, the conversion of sinners, the circulation of Bibles, and the general extension of the Kingdom of Christ.

And is it so that many of those who are engaged in such works shall be excluded from the kingdom of God? So the text proclaims. Nothing can be plainer. They shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, notwithstanding that they are like the wise in many points, but because they are unlike them in points which are of vital importance. One thing they lack, and in this their folly becomes manifest, they do not the sayings of our Lord. They hear His words, they call Him Lord, they prophesy, they cast out devils, and they do many wonderful works (at least, in the day of judgment they will claim that they had done wonderful works), but they fail in rendering obedience to the sayings of the Lord Jesus. They do not perform the things which He commands. They fail in doing the will of God. They fail in regulating their lives by the words of Christ; they fail in "mortifying the deeds of the body"; they fail in self-denial; and thus failing they remain destitute of personal holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Such is their character.

Second, consider their destiny, which shall be a dark one. First—Christ will disown them. He will say to them, "I never knew you." He never knew them in the sense of owning and approving them as His own. There never was any gracious intimacy between them and Christ. His denouncement of them shall not be, that they had fallen from grace, that He knew them once as His and then ceased to

know them. No, His denouncement will be that He never knew them, that they were never in a gracious state.

And then, again, because Christ shall disown them, they shall "not enter into the kingdom of heaven." They shall be kept out of it and banished from God's presence. The descending rain, and the swelling floods, and the blowing winds, shall beat upon their house, and it shall fall, and the fall of it shall be great. Their expectation disappointed, and their hope blasted, they shall have a ruinous fall, never more to rise again.

IN CONCLUSION.

First, what a loud call have we here to all that profess to hear the sayings of Christ, to be diligent in doing them. Brethren, see to it that you be doers of the word as well as hearers. Deceive not yourselves by a name only, without having the power of godliness.

(a) Make yourselves acquainted with the sayings of Christ. Study His word ; study this blessed Bible. Remember what Peter says: "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Read it all through ; read a portion of it every day ; read it prayerfully, thoughtfully, and with self-application. Ask yourselves, How does this apply to me ? Does it warn me, or teach me, or comfort me ?

(b) Be conscientious in your efforts to do the say

ings of Christ. What boots it though you know His sayings unless you do them. To know them without doing them is the very thing against which He gives this warning in this text. Be conscientious ; go about your duty as Christians. Be not satisfied with being as good as others, or better even. Compare not yourselves with others, but with the requirements of the word of God, and with the example of Christ Himself. Many are satisfied with being as good as others, or it may be, they suppose they are better than many others whom they know. But the apostle tells us that men who "compare themselves among themselves are not wise." Your neighbors ought not to be your standard of excellency in the Christian life. Christ and His sayings are the proper standard. Follow Him and honestly do what He tells you.

(c) If there are any special difficulties in your lot, do not I beseech you, make them an excuse for your becoming loose in your obedience to Christ. Your lot may be a hard one ; there may be great trials and temptations pressing upon you ; heavy burdens may be crushing you with their weight ; but do not think that such things can relieve you from the obligation to do what Christ tells you. If you have burdens cast them on the Lord. If trials and temptations press upon you, remember that, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able ; but will with the temptation make away to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x: 13.

(d) Set apart a portion of time occasionally or at regular intervals for reviewing your lives and for comparing your state with Christ's sayings. Examine yourselves. Sit down candidly and carefully take a retrospective view of your course of life; examine yourselves by the law of God; look at each of the ten commandments, then you may know whether or not you are keeping them; look through your lives from your youth to the present time, then you may know your sins and repent of them, and that you may also know how far you have been living as Christians.

And, *second*, what a loud call have we here to those that are altogether destitute of religion; that neither hear the sayings of Christ to any good effect nor do them. It is surely high time for you to awake out of your sleep of sin and carelessness. If among those that profess to hear and respect the words of Christ there is a class that shall ~~not~~ enter into the kingdom of heaven, what will become of you? I beseech you, repent, turn to God and believe in Christ now. O, impenitent and unsaved sinners, you are on the road to ruin. Stop! I beseech you. Go no further in that direction. Do you fear that you shall not be admitted into the kingdom of God. While you obey not the Gospel of Christ, you have no good scripture ground of hope for the future. Believe now. Why will you perish? O, neglect not the great salvation. Christ has atoned for sin by His death; God is waiting to be gracious to all that believe in Him. He will forgive their sins and save their souls.—Amen. N. McK.

DISCOURSE III.

THE STRONG MAN SPOILED.

Luke xi : 21-22 ; Ps. xxxix : 6 ; Ps. x : 1 ; Ps. cxix : 36.

THE occasion of this parable was the accusation which the Jews preferred against Jesus, that He cast out devils by the prince of the devils. The unreasonableness of this charge, He manifested and exposed, by reference to a divided house and a divided kingdom ; and to illustrate and make clear His reply, He spake the parable which I have read, and which I now proceed to expound.

I. IN THIS PARABLE WE HAVE

A strong man, armed ; and the strong man armed signifies Satan.

First, He is strong. Yes, no doubt he is strong, much stronger than man. He is a being of a higher order than man. He was made an angel; his first estate was one of dignity and honor and excellency and glory ; but he fell from his first estate and became an evil spirit ; he has become corrupted and evil, yet he has retained much of his original strength. The strength which he formerly used for good, he now uses for evil.

Second, He is armed. This signifies his wiles and snares, his darts, his subtleties, whereby he wields his influence over the children of men. He has fiery darts ; he uses powerful temptations. (*a*) He plays upon the reason of men by sophistry ; he makes them argue and reason, and draw conclusions in order to accomplish his ends. He can even quote scripture when it suits his purpose to do so, as he did when he tempted our Lord Jesus Himself. (*b*) He plays also upon the affections of men, he works upon their fears and their hopes and their love and their hatred. No doubt he made Judas believe that he would reap much benefit, much comfort and satisfaction from the sum of money for which he betrayed his Lord and Master. (*c*) He also plays upon the lusts and passions of men, acting like a skilful angler, who, when one kind of bait does not do, proceeds to use another.

II. THE STRONG MAN'S PALACE.

This signifies mankind ; unconverted individuals and communities are houses and palaces of Satan.

First, This is an alarming and sad fact, that man in his unrenewed and unregenerate state is an abode of evil spirits. Like a parasitic animal, that lodgeth within the body of another and preys upon him, so the spirits of the pit have found a lodgment in mankind. In the days of Christ, evil and unclean spirits took possession of men in such a way as to make them mad,

lose their reason and become unfit for society. And no man can prove that there are no such possessions in our own day. But whether or not there is another kind of possessions, by which evil spirits make men blind in regard to spiritual and eternal things, and not only blind but mad, foolish and unreasonable.

Second. This palace is kept by the strong man. He is in possession of it and he guards it and keeps it. Yes, he attends carefully to the interests of his kingdom in the unrenewed and the unconverted. The devil has taken up his abode in mankind; he lodges in them that he may destroy them.

Third. In this palace the goods are in peace while the strong man keeps it with his armour on. The strong man has undisturbed possession of his palace, and his goods. Alas, that men are satisfied with him, do not quarrel with him, nor strive to get away from him! Unconverted men are like slaves that hug their chains wherewith they are bound. They offer no resistance, but yield themselves to the hellish influence that carries them down the place of perdition, senseless and unaware of the danger to which they are exposed.

Brethren, look around you, and see how quiet and easy and unmoved and peaceable, are sinners in their sins, serving their lusts and the devil. Men are at ease in the midst of the greatest danger, on the brink of awful ruin. They find pleasure in their sinful ways. They are unmoved while they are in the gall of bitterness, alienated from God, without an interest in Christ,

and without any good hope or prospect for the world to come. O, how sad the sight which frequently meets our eyes ! The goods in the palace at peace, under the guardianship and the power of the evil one. Alas ! alas, how shall we sufficiently bemoan the state of unregenerate and unrenewed men ? how shall we ? Brethren, if you have tears prepare to shed them for sons and daughters, brothers and neighbors, in whom the strong man keeps his palace and his goods in peace.

Did you see a man standing on the railway track, unconcerned and unmoved while the train came thundering behind him, and was already within a few yards of him ; would you not be alarmed for him ? would you not shout to him and try to arrest his attention and make him aware of his danger ? And if he stood there till the train came on and killed him, would you not say, There was something wrong with him ; either he was deaf, or stupified, or madly bent on self-destruction. You could never believe that he was in the ordinary possession and exercise of human senses and human reason. And yet, is there not here something more deplorable, sinners easy and unconcerned, and unmoved, quite calm and undisturbed, without peace with God, or any well-grounded hope of everlasting life ; the strong man armed keeping his palace and his "goods in peace."

Or, did you see a man sitting at his ease in his house, smoking his pipe, or playing idly with his

fingers, while the flames were breaking through the roof of his house and crackling along every rafter ; you shout, you look in at his window, and call to him to escape or he will soon be burned to death ; but he pays no attention ; he turns a deaf ear to your entreaties, and at last he dies an awful death, perishing in the flames. Did you see such a thing, I say, what would you think of it ? You would greatly pity the poor man ; you would be shocked at his fate ; and would never believe that he was in his right senses and in the possession of reason. And yet, is there not here something more deplorable—sinners are on the brink of perdition, unconcerned and unmoved. God's wrath is denounced against them ; the graves are opening beside them ; there is but a step between them and everlasting burnings ; the flames of hell are even now almost laying hold of them, and yet they are quiet and peaceable and unmoved. How shall we account for this lamentable fact ? how, but by the doctrine of my text, the "strong man armed is keeping his palace and his goods are in peace." They say, "Peace, peace, while there is no peace."

Oh, is there nothing to disturb this peace ? Is there no one to dislodge this strong man ? Blessed be God, my text reveals that there is.

III. The stronger one than the strong man who is armed and keeps his palace. Yes, he keeps it till the stronger one comes upon him, and "taketh from him his armour wherein he trusted." This stronger one

signifies Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the blessed Saviour of sinners, who came into this world to "destroy the works of the devil."

1. "A stronger man than he." This is a designation, or title that is quite applicable to our blessed Redeemer when we compare Him with the devil. The devil is strong, but Christ is stronger; stronger than all that can be in opposition to Him; He is Almighty; He is the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" Isa. ix: 6. He is almighty by His nature, for He is God. And He is almighty by commission and delegation from the Father; for all power in heaven and on earth is given to Him.

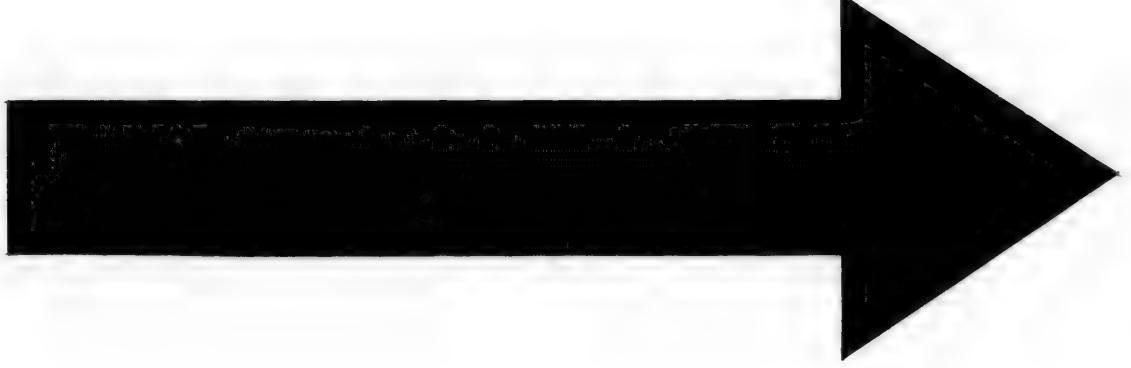
2. My text says, "Then a stronger than he shall come upon him." Jesus, the stronger, has come upon the strong one. In the fulness of time, He came upon him during His sojourn on earth, in the power by which He wrought His miracles, and in the power by which He made an atonement for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He has already made an inroad into the kingdom of the devil. There was a great battle at the crucifixion, when Jesus vanquished "principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly" on His cross. And now He comes upon him in connection with the preaching of the Gospel for his expulsion from individual men. He comes by the power of truth; by His word and spirit.

3. He overcomes him; He paralyzes his arm;

He dislodges him from his position, and He vanquishes him. When He comes into a sinner's heart there can be no doubt as to the side on which the victory will be, for He is a divine conqueror.

4. And "He taketh from him his armour wherein he trusted." When Christ has overcome the devil He takes from him his armour. He restrains and puts to silence his suggestions, his whisperings, his temptations. He comes with truth and dispels error with light and removes darkness, with health and healing remedies and dislodges disease, with life and vanquishes death, and with divine and heavenly weapons and strength and makes ineffectual the fiery darts and the whole armour of the wicked one.

5. And when He has accomplished all this, it is but an easy task to divide the spoil, to take to Himself and make His own the souls that were under the influence of the strong one. Souls are the spoil of Jesus Christ, the spoil which He takes from Satan. This despoiling of Satan He did in an open and manifest manner during His ministry on earth, when He cast out devils and restored their ordinary senses and reason to those that were oppressed by Satan. But these deliverances were only, so to speak, typical and preparatory to the deliverances which He is affording sinners to this day, when He enlightens their understanding, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.



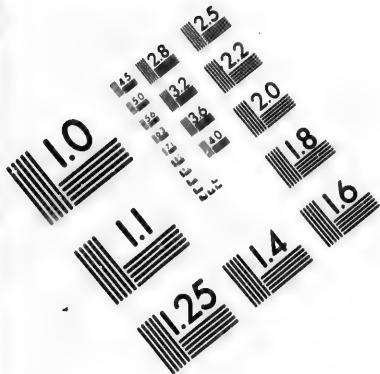
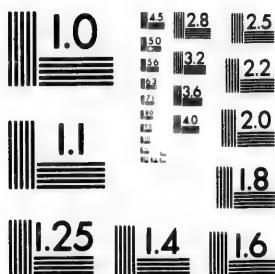
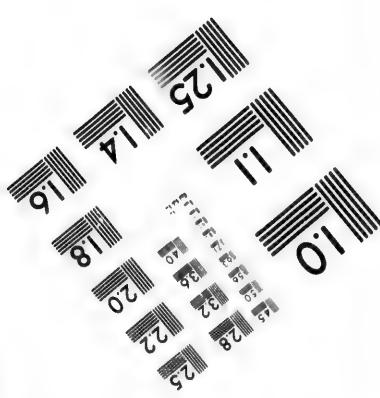


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IN CONCLUSION, BRETHREN,

First—Consider how thankful we should all be that Jesus, a stronger one than our great enemy, the devil, has come and undertaken to disarm and spoil him. O, it is great ground and reason for gratitude ; it is matter for thanksgiving and great rejoicing. Let us call on our souls, and all that is within, to thank God for the mission of His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. He came to destroy the works of the devil ; He came to die for the guilty, thereby to vanquish him that held them in bondage ; to “preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

“He came to raise our fallen state,
And our lost hopes restore ;
Faith leads us to the mercy-seat,
And bids us fear no more.”

Second--With what diligence, and zeal and earnestness should all those whom He has already actually delivered, love, serve and obey Him. Are there not some here from whose souls He has dislodged the usurper, and from whose necks He has broken Satan's yoke ? I hope there are. I believe there are. O, it were indeed sad if after all that we have heard, and felt, and professed, there were none amongst us who have been delivered from spiritual thraldom ! It were it were ! But, surely, we are not left to such unmitigated sorrow. No, there are some here who have

been delivered by the stronger one than our great oppressor ! Well, brethren, I beseech you, love the name of Jesus. Oh, love Him ! Love Him with all your hearts, and souls and strength. Love Him and serve Him ; be not ashamed of Him ; make full proof of your faith by obedience to His holy law ; serve Him in "newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Oh, shake off the dulness and the sloth which earth and earthly things draw upon you ! When you are dying you will wonder that you were not more enthusiastic in the service of Jesus. And when you get within the gates of the heavenly city, if your new experiences will permit you to look back upon the past, you will wonder that you did not do more to glorify His name and to draw others to Him.

Third—Are there any here in whom "the strong man armed is keeping his palace"? I beseech you seek to realize the truth of the position which you occupy. Do not imagine that the Spirit of God overstated the case when he says that the "god of this world hath blinded the minds of those that believe not" (2 Cor. iv : 4), and that his spirit worketh in the "children of disobedience." No, the spirit of truth does not exaggerate matters to raise in you a false alarm. It is the plain and simple truth that, in order to save your souls, Christ needs to overcome the devil and take from him his armour wherein he trusteth.

Will you not, therefore, look to this great deliverer ? Look to Him ; believe in Him. As you are able, in so

far as you can, or are able, put yourselves in this way. Do not sit any longer unconcerned and unmoved in a house on fire. Stand not stupidly before the thundering train of God's wrath, and the curse and condemnation of His law. Realize your position ; listen to the warning voice that has been sounding in your ears. Accept deliverance ; Christ came to save. He came "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Accept Him as your deliverer, and He will save you. Amen.

Mosa, Dec., 1879.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNING.

Luke, xi : 24-26 ;

Ps. lxxxvi : 6-10 ; Ps. lxxxvi : 11-13 ; Ps. lxxxvi : 14-16.

THIS parable is connected closely with the parable of the strong man keeping his palace. The two parables have many things in common, although they differ in several important particulars. Both parables represent and illustrate the sad fact that men in their unrenewed state, and as the gospel finds them, are under the oppressing influence of evil spirits. In one parable the strength of evil spirits is brought into view, in the other their uncleanness. In the one, the strong man is expelled by one stronger than he, in the other the unclean spirit goes away of his own accord. The one parable, therefore, illustrates a true conversion or a permanent reformation, the other illustrates a false conversion or a temporary reformation.

I shall arrange my remarks under the following heads : 1. The state of the man before the departure of the unclean spirit. 2. And the state of both man and spirit afterwards. 3. The return of the unclean spirit, and the state of the man after his return.

I. WE ARE TO CONSIDER THE STATE OF THE MAN BEFORE
THE DEPARTURE OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

There is not much in the words of the text to indicate what the state of the man is, before the unclean spirit goes out of him. All we have in the text on this head is the implication that the unclean spirit is in the man. The words are, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man." If he is now gone out of him, he was in him before he went out. The unclean spirit was in him, and what the state of a man is with an unclean spirit in him we must find out from what scripture elsewhere teaches concerning such a state.

(a) Without looking closely into scripture at all, our common sense exercised upon the designation "unclean spirit," will tell us, that it must be a terrible thing for a man to have such a spirit in him. This state must be a sad and deplorable one, while he has an unclean spirit influencing or controlling him in any measure or degree. The presence of such a spirit must make the man unclean. Unclean and vile and miserable must he be under such unclean influences. Common sense teaches us that much.

(b) And when we inquire what scripture says, our impressions are deepened and we understand that the state of the man is miserable and lamentable indeed. Thus, in the days of Christ unclean spirits took possession of some men in such a way as to deprive them of reason, make them mad, and control their bodily

actions and unfit them for the society of men. Take for example the description given of the demoniac of Gadara. "And when He (Jesus) was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs ; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains, because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces ; neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshiped Him, and cried in a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God ? I adjure Thee, by God, that Thou torment me not. For He had said unto him, Come out of the man thou unclean spirit. And He asked him, What is thy name ? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion : for we are many." (Mark v: 2-9.)

Such a description needs no comment to give us an idea of the lamentable and miserable condition in which the man was while the unclean spirit was in him.

But are men that are made mad and furious by unclean spirits the only persons whose state are made sad and deplorable by this ? Ah, no. So, secondly, Jesus said to the Jews that opposed Him, and that were not mad at all in the ordinary sense of madness, " Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father

ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own ; because he is a liar and the father of it." (John viii : 44.)

And Paul says to the Ephesians, " And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience " (Eph. ii: 12); and to the Corinthians, " But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv : 3-4.) And John says, " He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii: 8.)

Yes, alas ! it is the doctrine of scripture, that the devil and demons and unclean spirits are in men, and work in men that do not believe, that are unconverted and that have not come to God by Jesus Christ. And while they are in such a state they are in a deplorable condition. It gives me no pleasure to say this of my fellowman ; I only repeat the sentiments of scripture to warn them of the danger to which they are exposed, if they be not delivered from their spiritual bondage.

II. CONSIDER THE DEPARTURE OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT
AND THE STATE OF BOTH MAN AND SPIRIT AFTERWARDS.

(a) His departure is of his own motion. He goeth out of his own accord. For reasons not stated the unclean spirit goeth out. He is not expelled nor driven out, he goeth out. What makes him go we are not told. It may be he is afraid of the truth when it is brought to the attention of the man ; or he is afraid that he is about to be expelled. In this case the unclean spirit is not so bold and persevering as in some cases. Some evil spirits, it appears, are more wicked than others ; bolder and more determined and persevering than others. There are, it appears, different degrees, ranks, orders and dispositions among evil spirits as among men. Therefore some are more weakminded than others and go out without being expelled ; yet go with great reluctance, for they are anxious to return if they find no other lodgment.

(b) The unclean spirit being gone, the man makes considerable reformation. He gets into a different state from that in which he was. If he was addicted to the vile habit of cursing and swearing he gives it up, or at least in a great measure. If he was addicted to drinking, he becomes sober. If he was addicted to lewdness he becomes chaste, and it may be he becomes even religious. He tries to be very good and righteous ; he begins to pray ; he seeks the society of believers, and if he is induced to leave the denomina-

tion in which he was brought up, and takes up different views, perhaps about baptism, or free will, or the work of grace, or the principals of church government, he becomes very bigoted. He is ready to declare that the church which he left had not the gospel at all, and that there is every reason to fear that they who are connected with it will all perish. Such is the change and the state into which the man comes. He has made a great reformation ; he has swept and garnished himself, but he has not understood the gospel ; he has not received Christ.

(c) During all this reformation on the part of the man, the unclean spirit that has left him is going "through dry places, seeking rest and finding none." He is restless during his wanderings. He seeks rest but he findeth it not. He walketh through "dry places," places where he can find no suitable abode for himself. It may be, the abodes into which he would like to enter are occupied by other unclean spirits, who will not have him with them or with whom he does not like to stay.

III. CONSIDER THE RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT, AND THE MAN'S STATE AFTER HIS RETURN.

(a) The unclean spirit's search for rest proving unsuccessful, he says to himself, "I will return into my house whence I came out," and when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. The dust, fly marks and smoke stains have been cleaned off.

The brush has been applied ; a rubbing of paint here, and a white-washing there. What an apt figure and illustration of an apparent conversion ! A reformation of manners without any true piety ; a reformation and a profession of religion without any Christ in it. The unclean spirit returns and looks at his former abode. And he finds now a nice, cleanly gentleman or lady, moral, decent, it may be, surrounded by good Christians who think favorably of him or her ; who think, " Well, we have one added to our numbers ; here is a new convert. Our prayers have been answered ; the labours of our minister are very useful." Ah, but the unclean spirit sees that it is all a sham, it is all a mere show of life while still there is death. This old house of his is "swept and garnished," but then there is no new occupant, no Christ, no power of grace. And what does he do ?

(b) He goes and "taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there." Notice, it does not say seven other spirits more unclean than himself. Oh, no ; but seven other spirits "more wicked." A complete garrison of spirits that are more wicked, more determined, bolder and less easily frightened. He is not anxious to increase the uncleanness. Perhaps there was too much of that before, and that was partly the reason why he had to go away. No, he does not wish to increase the uncleanness, but he wishes to increase the wickedness. So he goeth and taketh with him seven spirits "more

wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there." And what is the result? Why, what might be expected.

(c) "The last state of that man is worse than the first." This does not at all mean that the man is now viler, and more abominable in the eyes of men than before; that there are deeper turpitude and greater heinousness in his sins than before. No. During the absence of the unclean spirit, he became swept and garnished, and it is not necessary that he should turn at once to his old sins and habits. He need not throw off the show of morality and decency which he has assumed. All that is necessary is, that he should become hardened in wrong and erroneous religious sentiment, that he be conceited, proud, self-righteous, covetous, infidel or sceptical. He may become a scoffer, or he may not, but he will be less open to truth, more difficult of impression, and more skilful in making excuses and in framing arguments in defence of the coldness and formality of his religion, or of his entire neglect of the ordinances of God's house. There were persons of this class in the days of Paul. He says to the elders of Ephesus, "I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts. xx : 29-30.) Peter also speaks of this class of deluded men; and so does Jude, who says, "These are spots in your feasts of charity when they

feast with you, etc." (Jude 12). And there have been some of these in every age.

Now what is the practical lesson?

1. Be on your guard—Be not satisfied with a change or reformation without Christ.
2. A temporary reformation of religion is of no use.

DISCOURSE V.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

Matt. xiii : 24-30 ; and 36-43. Another parable, etc.; Ps. lxxxv : 8 ; Ps. xxii : 28 ; Ps. xcii : 12.

THIS parable and explanation state and illustrate several momentous facts and truths concerning the present condition and the future prospects of men. I crave your serious attention, while I endeavor to expound it, in dependence on the divine blessing.

This parable plainly teaches, that the two great classes into which men are divisible, are mixed up together in this world, like wheat and tares that grow together in the same field. The field signifies the world considered as the habitation of men, where for the present, the righteous and the ungodly are mingled together and in many instances live side by side. This has been always the condition of the world and its inhabitants since the fall of Adam. Ever since that memorable event this world's inhabitants have been more or less a mixed population. In our own day we have evidently this kind of mixture ; we have the good and the bad, believers and unbelievers, living together in the same world, in the same countries, in the same towns, and in many instances in the same families.

The wheat and the tares represent the two classes

of men; and we ought not to forget that each of us belongs to one or other of these classes. We are either good seed that grows up and develops into precious wheat, or tares, or darnel, a noxious and poison plant. These facts are both serious and important, and it becomes us all to ponder them deeply.

We learn from this parable that the Son of Man and the devil are the originators of the wheat and the tares respectively. The Son of Man sowed good seed in His field, but the devil, His enemy, sowed the tares. Embracing an opportunity which is represented in the parable, by the time when men slept, the devil sowed tares, that is, led men astray into sin and rebellion against God and made them his own followers. Hence, the good seed are called "the children of the kingdom" and the tares are called "the children of the wicked one." Look closely at these two titles.

I. THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM.

What a beautiful title is this which the Lord Jesus applies to those that believe in Him. Believers are children of the kingdom; the kingdom of Jesus Christ belongs to them and they belong to it. In the lower province of this kingdom, namely, the church, which He has established on earth, the children are preparing for the employments and the enjoyments, the glory and the happiness of the higher province of it above. Jesus is their king; His word is their statute book; and in His service they delight to

be employed. They love His person, they copy His example ; and His Spirit guides them.

Let those of you that are devout followers of the Lord mark the title which He here applies to you, and meditate on the precious things that are implied in it. You are the children of the kingdom of grace. God is your father by the regeneration. Jesus is your elder brother as well as your Prince and Saviour. The kingdom of heaven which Jesus has established on earth is yours ; you are its subjects and its children. And the kingdom of glory is yours ; you are its heirs, and by and by you shall be put in possession of all its riches and its blessings ; therein you shall have an everlasting salvation.

And now, seeing that such a title and such privileges belong to you, and that such glorious prospects are opened up before you, will you not, in your walk and conversation act in a manner becoming your high calling and your bright destiny ? Acquit yourselves, I beseech you, in a manner becoming your honorable title and your high relations. Will you stoop to the mean and filthy things that pertain to the kingdom of your enemy, the devil ? Oh, do not, I beseech you, my brethren. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Walk as children of the light and of the day, and glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are His. Walk in holiness and love ; copy the example of the great Master Himself ; and be followers of those who have gone before you and are now inheriting the promises.

His

II. THE CHILDREN OF THE WICKED ONE.

These are represented in the parable by the tares which the enemy of the householder sowed in his field, that is, as I apprehend, they have their origin, in so far as they are sinful and impenitent, from Satan. Their wickedness may be traced up to the malicious work of the devil, which is its source. Hence, they are called "the children of the wicked one." All the evil that is in the world has its source and origin in the father of lies, but in such a way as that the responsibility of men is not by that fact cancelled. He is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." His object is to destroy man; hence he is said to walk about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

"Children of the wicked one." What an awful title is this which Jesus applies to those who are impenitent and unbelieving, and who refuse to accept His salvation, or to submit to His authority. "Children of the wicked one." Are there any here who are willing to take this title to themselves? I presume there are not any. But are you all believers, earnest and devoted Christians? Do you all walk by faith and not by sight? Are you all constrained by the love of Christ, to be obedient to Him and to do all that you do to the glory of God? I presume there is no man of any Christian intelligence and experience among you, who firmly believes that you are all the

children of the kingdom. But what then are those that are not the children of the kingdom? There are here only two classes mentioned. In the field there were only wheat and tares; in the world there are only children of the kingdom and children of the wicked one. Therefore, my hearer, painful though it may be for me to say it, and unpleasant though it may be for you to hear it, yet if you are impenitent and unregenerate, if you have not been united to Christ by faith, if you are not Christ's devout follower, I must call you a child of the wicked one. And if this title does not please you, know that you will gain nothing by getting angry at it, or at him who applies it to you, and that the course which wisdom would direct is, to take steps to secure a better title. I beseech you take the necessary steps towards that end. To guide you, I preach to you, and to bestow the blessed title of a child of God upon you, if you believe in His name, Jesus came to the world and suffered and died. Oh! turn to Him and He will bless you and give you an everlasting salvation.

From this parable and its interpretation, we learn that it is the will of the Son of Man that the tares and the wheat should be allowed to grow together in the field till the time of the harvest, and that no efforts should be made by His servants, whether men or angels, to drive the children of the wicked one out of the world until the end of the world comes. The servants of the householder said unto Him, "Wilt

thou that we go and gather them up? But He said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the time of harvest."

A great number of divines and expositors explain this prohibition against gathering out the tares, as signifying a command to the church not to be too strict in the application of church discipline. I find indeed that the majority of those who have written on this parable have applied this part of it to church discipline; and as a necessary part of this explanation they say that, "The field signifies the church." A few, however, contend that "the field" signifies the world, and that the command of the householder, "Let both grow together until the harvest," has no reference at all to church discipline, but to persecution; or rather, spreading out the circle to a wider circumference, to any attempt which either angels or men might make, or wish to make, to rid the world of wicked men. Brethren, permit me to say, that after careful examination I myself have adopted the latter view. "The field is the world." I must hold this fast; for Jesus says it in His explanation of the parable. And we know from other parts of scripture that He has appointed church discipline, and that He gives instructions concerning the exercise of it. When He gave "the power of the keys," as it is called, to His disciples, He commanded them to use it. And by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul gives instructions concerning the exercise

of discipline, in one of the epistles to the Corinthians, and other places. If the command, "Let both grow together until the harvest," bears on church discipline, it prohibits it entirely, and no man must be excommunicated however heretical may be his doctrines or immoral his conduct. But such an application cannot be allowed, for it is in direct opposition to other passages which enjoin the infliction of expulsion on certain offenders. The words, "Let both grow together until the harvest," are spoken rather in the spirit of Christ's reply to the disciples, James and John, when they said to Him, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" But He turned round and rebuked them and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." Both this rebuke and the injunction, "Let both grow together until the harvest," prohibit persecution and intolerance. They prohibit such work as the burning of the heretics, a work by which many in awful delusion, have supposed that they were doing God service. These passages carry in their bosom the principles of toleration, and are witnesses for the long-suffering and patience of the Lord, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

The Rev. William Arnot says, "The passage condemns persecution, but it seems not to bear upon dis-

cipline at all. In its secondary sense, or by implication, it protects the wicked from any attempt on the part of the church to cast them out of the world by violence ; but it does not, in any form or measure, vindicate a place for the impure within the communion of the church of Christ. Arguments against the exclusion of unworthy members, founded on this parable, are nothing else than perversions of scripture. Elsewhere Christians may clearly read their duty in regard to any brother who walks disorderly ; elsewhere they may learn how to counsel, exhort and rebuke the erring, and if he remain impenitent, how to cast him out of communion, by a spiritual sentence ; but in this parable, regarding these matters, no judgment is given."

This parable and its interpretation plainly teach that, although the Son of Man permits the children of the wicked one to live beside the children of the kingdom and to mingle with them in this world, yet, at the end of the world He will order a total and eternal separation. The householder said to His servants, "Let both grow together until the harvest ; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn." Now you will see in Christ's own explanation, that "The harvest is the end of the world : and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall

gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity."

Here on earth the wicked and the righteous are mingled together: such has always been the state of matters, and such apparently shall be the state of matters till the end of the world. A process of separation is indeed going on according to laws and principles which Jesus has established. He has His "fan in His hand" and He will "thoroughly purge his floor"; but the process shall not be completed till the end of the world. But at the end of the world a separation clean and complete, without blunder or mistake, shall be effected. The Son of Man has ability and authority to do it. God has given to Him "power to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." "God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world by that Man whom He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men in that He has raised Him from the dead!" The field belongs to Him, although His enemy has sown tares in it, which He permits to grow in the meantime among His own good seed, but ultimately He will bring about a complete separation. The separation is only delayed in mercy for a season. It will yet surely come and not tarry.

At the end of the world "the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him," whom He shall send out to gather the wicked out of His kingdom. The dead shall rise and the living shall be changed: none shall be wanting, and a separation

shall be made. "The wicked shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous," for powerful angels shall gather out of the kingdom of Jesus all that offend and them who do iniquity.

This parable and Christ's explanation of it give us a glimpse of the destinies of these two classes respectively beyond the day of their final separation : awful things are in store for "the children of the wicked one"; but a happy and glorious future opens up before "the children of the kingdom." The tares shall be bound in bundles to be burned, but the wheat shall be gathered into the barn of the householder ; this is an imagery, whereof the explanation is, that the angels shall cast those that "offend," and them that "do iniquity" into "a furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," but "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Look closely for a little at the awful prospect that lies before the "children of the wicked one," beyond the end of the world and the judgment day. Indeed there is terrific language used throughout the whole of this passage to describe the state and prospects of this class. They are "tares," "an enemy," the "devil," has sown the seed from which they have sprung up—they are "the children of the wicked one"—they are to be "bound together in bundles"—they are to be "cast, into a furnace of fire"—and there they shall have "wailing and gnashing of teeth." In the time of harvest the householder says to the reapers, "Gather

ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them"; and I have read somewhere that Augustine's exposition of the binding in bundles, is, that different classes of sinners and offenders shall be grouped together; extortioners with extortioners, adulterers with adulterers, murderers with murderers, thieves with thieves, drunkards with drunkards, and profane swearers with profane swearers, and so forth. The idea may be a correct one. There is reason to believe that the punishment of the ungodly shall be some way in the line of their prevailing iniquities, and there is no doubt that their punishment shall be of different degrees of severity; but at the same time, all scripture imagery on this point goes to show, that the lowest degree of punishment shall be overwhelming and intolerable; and it is especially made manifest that the severest punishment shall be inflicted on those who have the means of grace, but misimprove them and neglect the great salvation. "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes."

And is there nothing in these representations of the doom of the ungodly, that is alarming to you, O impenitent and careless and unconverted sinner? Surely there is, if you have sense to perceive it. First observe, that angels, powerful angels, shall gather out of the kingdom of Christ all things that offend and them who

do iniquity. You may disregard the labours and the efforts of those who now counsel you to come to Jesus for salvation ; but will you be able to resist the angels? You may resist or neglect the gospel call and invitation now, but by and by angels' hands shall drive thee unresisting into the company of the damned for thy final overthrow. Observe secondly, that the impenitent and the damned shall be "cast into a furnace of fire." They shall be cast into it, thrown, plunged. The angels shall handle them without ceremony, without pity, with violence devoid of gentleness. It may be that you think those who are in earnest for the salvation of your soul ill-mannered, rude and impolite and intolerable, when they remind thee of thy sins and thy danger, and earnestly press on thine acceptance the gospel of the Son of God; but a day is coming when the very angels of God shall use far less ceremony, and much greater vehemence and violence in dealing with thee and shall cast thee soul and body into hell. And thirdly, observe, that forever afterwards thou shalt have misery enough. Thy final abode shall be a furnace of fire, and there thou shalt have wailing and gnashing of teeth. What terrible representations are these ? Surely he must be a madman that can find it in his heart to make light of such things. How much is he to be pitied who is so blind to his own best interests, as not to stir himself up to flee from "the wrath to come," to leave the ranks of the impenitent and to escape the awful doom that awaits them.

Christless and unbelieving soul, you may have what you think to be a bright home now, but a furnace of fire is prepared to receive thee ; you may be basking in the sunshine of earthly prosperity now, but hell is prepared for thee. "The rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment." Thou mayest have mirth and merriment now, but wailing and gnashing of teeth are like to be thine eternal experience and portion.

O unconverted and unsaved one, take warning, take warning, I beseech thee. A view of the wicked's doom is laid before thee in this parable and its explanation, that thou mayest in good time take steps to avoid the awful place whither thou hast been hitherto travelling. O deceive not thyself any longer. Lay not a fatal opiate to thine heart by imagining that there is after all no cause of alarm, and that thou mayest come off very well in the end, although thou givest to thyself no great trouble about the matter of religion. Nothing will serve thy purpose but faith, living faith in Jesus—a faith working by love, and that will "purify the heart" and "overcome the world." Seek that, labour for it, pray for it and live in the daily exercise of it.

But look now at the glorious prospect that lies before the children of the kingdom. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." They shine forth as the sun—a visible glory shall be upon them. Their body shall be made

like the glorious body of Jesus Himself ; and souls purified from corruption and sin, shall be clothed in moral and spiritual beauty, on which the eye of God and the eyes of all the angelic hosts may rest with pleasure and complacency. " Beloved, it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is." (I John iii : 2.)

" And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel xii : 3.)

Then shall be the time for the manifestation of the sons of God. Here while mingled with the children of the wicked one they are comparatively hidden, and under a cloud. But the time of their manifestation and vindication is drawing nigh. After their final separation from the children of the wicked one they shall be revealed and publicly acknowledged. Their crowns of glory shall be put upon their heads ; and in the brightness of the image of Jesus, and of perfected graces of the Christian character, shall they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They shall not sorrow any more, nor fear, nor be dismayed. " For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. vii : 17.)

And who are here present to-day that have such

a trust in Christ, and such a hope for the time to come? I beseech you, "purify yourself as He is pure." Set before you no lower standard than that of the life of Jesus Himself. No other standard is safe, therefore, "quit ye like men, be strong." "Walk as children of the light." If you expect to shine as the sun hereafter, put not your light under a bushel now. Put not your candle "under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." "Take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "Faithful is He that calleth you," who also will give you success, working in you the "good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power"; working in you "both to will and to do of His good pleasure." "Therefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

In conclusion, "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." These great and important truths concern us all. We shall be parties in the final separation. Each of us will stand on this side or on that, on the right hand or on the left. Either we shall be cast into the furnace of fire or made to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. And now is the time for securing our escape from the former destiny, and for

making the necessary preparation for enjoying the latter. The gospel elsewhere shows us, although this parable does not, that sinners may now change ranks. To bring sinners over from the company of the children of the wicked one, into the number of the children of the kingdom, is the gospel preached. Is there here, therefore, any anxious soul who wishes to become the child of the kingdom? There is yet for you a ground of hope. Jesus commands the gospel to be preached to you. God calls you to repentance. Come then to Jesus. Come as you are. Make no delay. The door of mercy stands open. Run in and be safe.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE MUSTARD SEED.

Matt. xiii : 31-32; Mark iv : 30-32 ; Luke xiii : 18-19.

I. THE PLANT OR TREE, CONTROVERSIES RESPECTING IT.

HERE is a tree of small size called the *Salvudora Persica*, which some suppose to be the tree on which this parable is founded. But some who have examined the natural history of the plant, say that it was a plant that grew to perfection from its seed in one year, that is, it was an annual plant. There are several varieties of it. The largest and the one which was most likely the one alluded to here, is black mustard—*Nigra Sinapis*. Dr. Thompson and Captains Irby and Mangles, all say that they saw it as tall as a horse and its rider. Dr. Hoker says that he saw one on the banks of the Jordan ten feet high.

These plants are cultivated in England, but they do not grow to such a size there as they do in the Eastern and warm countries.

II. THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH

made this plant appropriate as an emblem of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore the foundation of a parable.

First. Its seed was small. It was not the smallest seed absolutely, but the smallest which was handled by the husbandman ; and it was very small in proportion to the plant that grew from it.

Second. Although the seed was small, the plant itself, when grown, was large, the largest of all garden plants, so large indeed, that it might be called a tree.

Third. Its seed was used proverbially to express a very small thing. It was in allusion to this proverbial use of the mustard seed that our Lord said to His disciples, " If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, remove hence to yonder place and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matt. xvii : 20.) In the Koran, the sacred book of the Mahomedans, it is used proverbially, " Oh, my son, every matter, whether good or bad, though it be but of the weight of the grain of mustard seed, and be hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, God will bring the same to light."

III. THE ASPECT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

which this parable illustrates is its great growth. From a small beginning it will grow to great size. From a small beginning it grows and becomes great.

It was in the shape of a promise to our first parents in Eden. Small, very small, but it grew. It was small in the family of Noah. But it grew in

ancient days till it included a whole nation. It was small in the days of Christ and the apostles, but it has grown since, and it is destined to grow yet larger and larger.

You may be impressed with some sense of the growth of this kingdom if you meditate on the following things :

(a) Its professing followers, or its subjects, have multiplied. They are to-day very numerous. There are millions of men and women who value highly this kingdom and its privileges. (See *April Record*, p. 97.)

(b) Its literature has grown. Think of more than ninety million copies of the Bible itself, in whole or in part, which have been issued in about 250 languages, by the Bible Societies. Besides, there are thousands and thousands of other religious books founded on the Bible, which have been published and scattered throughout the world; doctrinal works, historical works, practical works, exegetical works, commentaries, hymns, biographies, and so forth ; I cannot undertake to complete the list. The mass of Christian literature which has been scattered throughout the world, must be something enormous.

(c) Branches of it have followed the same law with the parent stem, in its rapid growth. Think of how it grew in Moses, in Paul, in Luther, in Calvin, in Knox, in the Church of Scotland, in the Free Church, in the Methodist Church, in the English Church, in the Baptist Church.

(d) It has already grown and it will yet grow more and more until it covers the whole earth. It will put forth branches ; the time is predicted when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." (Is. xi : 9.) "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it." (Is. ii : 2.)

(e) And as it grows in the world so it grows in individual hearts. It is small when felt, but it grows until the soul is subdued by it, and the whole man is consecrated to God.

Grow on, thou blessed kingdom, grow ; extend thy boundaries ; spread abroad thine influence ; multiply thy blessings. Fill men's hearts, fill men's lives with thy benign grace. Fill the world with Bibles and churches and holy men, who serve the Lord and follow Him through good report and through evil report !

IV. THE SPECIAL LESSON WHICH THE PARABLE

was evidently intended to convey, was encouragement.

First, It was very encouraging to the apostles and early preachers to be assured that the kingdom and cause of their Lord and Master, in whose interests they were deeply concerned, would grow. Very encouraging, surely ! Several of them heard this parable, and they would doubtless remember it, when after Christ's departure from them, they were engaged in the blessed work of preaching and proclaiming the

gospel of the kingdom, in the face of much opposition. How encouraging to them to be assured that the kingdom would grow, that it was destined to become a great tree in whose branches the birds of heaven would lodge. Troubles and trials awaited them, and they needed encouragement.

And not only did they meet with opposition from men when they labored in the gospel of the kingdom, but some of the parables which were used by Jesus in His public ministry were calculated to discourage them; such as the parable of the sower. But to counteract the depressing influence of that parable, this parable of the "Mustard Seed," was given. The parable of "The Sower" sets forth four different classes of gospel hearers, without indicating which class would be most numerous. Left in the shape in which that parable puts the kingdom of heaven, one might be ready to suppose that each of the bad classes that brought forth no fruit would be as numerous as the class represented by the good ground. Viewed in that way, all the three bad and fruitless classes would far outnumber the good fruit-bearing class. And such a view of the case would be depressing and discouraging. But this parable comes in beautifully and appropriately to preserve the mental equilibrium, or rather to make men look for such growth of the kingdom as would make the number of gracious and saved ones far larger than the number of graceless and lost souls that should be hearers of the gospel.

This parable was thus calculated to be very encouraging to the early preachers and ministers of the word.

Second. Not only was this parable encouraging to the apostles and the early preachers of the word ; it is also encouraging to ministers and missionaries in this, and in every succeeding age. Difficulties are still in the way : The world, the devil and the flesh are in strong opposition. Men's hearts are slow to receive the truth which we proclaim. Things meet us that are calculated to dishearten us. But we have the word of God to uphold us, and especially we have this parable and similar passages to encourage and to cheer us on in the good work in which we are engaged.

The kingdom will grow. Nothing is surer than that it will grow. We have the word of God to assure us. We have the promise of Jesus Himself. We have this parable. Therefore let all ministers preach faithfully and diligently. Let them preach hopefully ; let them preach in the full confidence that their labors shall not be in vain in the Lord. And let all elders and devoted and praying Christians pray with redoubled energy and importunity. Brethren, pray for the growth of the kingdom, pray for the success of the word of the Lord, pray for the conversion of sinners. The work will prosper. The kingdom will grow. There will be no mistake about it. Jesus will " See of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" ; and if He be satisfied, surely we ought to be, surely we ought to rejoice at the prospect of this glorious consummation.

And if this be all true, does it not speak powerfully to all unsaved, but anxious persons? It does surely. What could be more inspiring and animating and stimulating than the assurance that the kingdom will grow, that the Lord is determined to save souls, to people His kingdom and to get glory to Himself from the salvation of multitudes of those who have deserved to be cast away forever from His presence and from the glory of His power?

Therefore, oh, unsaved sinner, be saved, I beseech you! Why would you be lost if you would rather be saved? Come into the kingdom. Let the word of the kingdom impress you and enter into your heart and bring you to the Lord and into His kingdom. Have you no anxieties at all? I know you have, you cannot be altogether free from them. You have a conscience; you have feelings; you do not like to be miserable. No! But you do not now understand how you may be happy. Be assured that it is false happiness which you can have astray from God, estranged from Him and without an interest in Christ. To be happy you must have peace with God; to have peace with God you must have an interest in Christ; to have an interest in Christ you must believe and obey His word. Come then, oh, unsaved soul; come to Jesus; come as you are. Come with your sins upon you; He will remove them. Come at once and without delay. Delay is dangerous, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."

March, 1882.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE LEAVEN LEAVENING THE MEAL.

Matt. xiii: 33, and Luke xiii: 20, 21.

THIS parable and the parable of the mustard seed both illustrate and predict the growth of the kingdom of God in this world. The kingdom of God had a small beginning; but it grows, and it is destined to cover the whole earth, and to change, or in some measure modify, both in principles and in form, all the institutions and ordinances of human society.

The parable of the mustard seed illustrates the growth which the kingdom of heaven has by a development from within itself, and the parable of the leaven illustrates its growth by the penetrating and pervading influence whereby it assimilates to itself the surrounding mass of the world's population, with which it comes in contact. Not that we are to understand that the kingdom of heaven has two different and distinct kinds of growth, but the one kind of growth by which it increases, presents two different aspects, each of which gets a parable from Jesus Christ to illustrate it.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

In the other passages leaven is used as a figure of something evil. As leaven acts upon the mass of meal in which it is concealed, and wherewith it is mixed, so evil acts amongst mankind. Our Lord Jesus speaks elsewhere of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, and warns his disciples against it. He means the erroneous and false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And Paul says, in I Cor. v: 6-8, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" and in Gal. v: 7-10, he says, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." It is plain that Paul in these passages means by the leaven, erroneous doctrines or wrong practices, or both, which had got in amongst the members of the churches in Corinth and Galatia, and that put their peace and salvation in danger.

Now, because leaven is thus in several passages, used as a figure of something evil, some commentators

have staggered at the obvious meaning of leaven in the parable under consideration, and they have endeavoured to prove that it means corrupting influences, or corruptions of Christianity in the Church of God. But they have not succeeded in their endeavours. The leaven in this parable does not signify corruptions of Christianity, but it signifies the principle of growth in Christianity, and the leavening of the whole lump of meal signifies the increase and growth of the true kingdom of God among men. You may remember that in the discourses on the parables, I have said once or twice that the same thing may be, and has in the scriptures been, used to illustrate different things in the kingdom of grace.

The following are plain and undeniable examples. In different passages the lion is used as a figure of Christ; He is called the "lion of the tribe of Judah"; but the lion is also the figure of the devil, for he is called "a roaring lion that walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The serpent is an emblem of the devil; but Christ exhorts His disciples to be "wise as serpents," and harmless as doves. There is a quality in the lion that makes him a suitable emblem of the devil, and there is also in him a quality that makes him a suitable emblem of Christ; and there is a quality in the serpent that makes it a suitable emblem of the devil, and there is a quality in it that makes it fit to teach a lesson to the disciples of Jesus. In the same way there is a quality in the leaven, or yeast,

that makes it a suitable figure of the power and progress of evil, and there is a quality in it (indeed the same quality) that makes it a suitable figure of the aggressive power of what is good, especially of the principle of growth that is in the kingdom of heaven.

It was a woman that took the leaven and put it in the meal—a woman and not a man. From this circumstance, some commentators draw lessons respecting a woman's duty in connection with the progress of God's cause in the world. One man says, "Perhaps we are meant to learn (and certainly it is the case) that in spreading the gospel there is work for women as well as men. We have only to read St. Paul's epistles, to see how women were made use of in the early church, and in our own time women hold a most important place in the work of the gospel." By others the woman has been explained as signifying the church, by whose labours the gospel is spread in the world. These suggestions are entitled to a respectful hearing in so far as they are supported by other scripture passages, but no doctrine that is not distinctly enunciated somewhere else in the Bible, can be defended by the circumstance that a woman and not a man took the leaven and hid it in the meal.

A woman is brought into this parable, because it was ordinarily the work of a woman to prepare bread for the household. The structure and the drapery of the parable are true to the customs of society. In preceding parables a man sowed seed in the ground,

for it was ordinarily the work of a man to sow seed ; and in this parable a woman is represented as taking the leaven and putting it into three measures of meal, for it was ordinarily the work of a woman to work in leaven and meal and to make bread.

The quantity of meal in which the leaven was hidden, was three measures, or an ephah. This was about the quantity which made up an ordinary batch of baking in the arrangement of household affairs. We read in Gen. 18th chapter, that when the Lord appeared unto Abraham in a vision of three men who came unto him as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day, Abraham proposed to entertain them hospitably. "And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes upon the hearth."

The division of the meal into three measures has been taken as having a spiritual significance. Some have said that they mean the three continents of the world then known ; others have said that they mean the three sons of Noah, by whom the world was peopled after the flood ; others have taken them as signifying the three divisions of human nature : spirit, soul and body, which Paul makes in I Thess. v : 23, " And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." These suggestions are interesting, and

it may be that some will find them useful in their meditations on divine things. But no authoritative assertion can be made as to which of these is the meaning of the three measures of meal, or whether it is necessary that we should attach any definite meaning to the number three at all. The main circumstance to be attended to is, that the whole in all its divisions is to be finally affected and influenced by the leaven, that is mixed up with it.

In the *first* place, the whole may be taken as signifying the whole world. We may take the parable as a prediction and an illustration of what we have doubtless reason to expect on the authority of other scriptures, namely, that the gospel shall yet achieve a universal triumph. The work of leavening the whole world by the gospel, has as yet but slowly progressed. Centuries have already passed away, and yet a great portion, a very large portion indeed, of the world is not brought under the power and influence of the gospel. Large tracts of the outlying heathen field have not yet been made acquainted with the gospel. And even in Christian lands, how many there are that are still living in ignorance, unbelief and ungodliness. But the decree has gone forth and the promise has been made that, "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering." (Mal. i: 11.) The time is coming when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and

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his Christ." (Rev. xi : 15.) The leaven has been put in and hidden in the mass, and fermentation has begun, is now going on, and finally the whole shall be leavened. Those that take an interest in the advancement of Christ's cause in the earth, and those that labour for the increase of His kingdom have no reason to be discouraged, for the leaven has been put into the mass and the fermentation is going on which will eventually leaven the whole.

In the *second* place, the whole may be understood as signifying the whole of the nature of man, his understanding, his conscience and his affections, his body and his soul. The parable may be taken as assuring us that every sinner, in whose heart the leaven of the gospel has been hidden by the grace of God, shall yet be sanctified wholly. Remains of corruption are still in converted men after their conversion. The best Christians are at times harrassed by the power of depravity that still remains in them ; and some Christians at times have strong temptations to give the whole thing up in despair under the fear that they are not making progress in the divine life, and that they will never succeed in becoming perfectly holy. These are all unnecessary and unworthy fears. No one that is anxious about his soul's salvation, and that loves Jesus, should yield to them. Everyone that believes in Christ and that struggles against sin ought to banish all fear of final success ; for although the conflict may hard and the struggle may long continue, yet final victory to the believer is certain.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

Matt. xiii : 44 : " Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

Ps. cxix : 11-16; Ps. cxii : 1-4; Ps. iv : 4-8.

IN times of wars and social disorders and disturbances, sometimes men hid their treasures of gold, silver and jewels, or a part of them in secret places,—sometimes they buried them in the ground. And it happened sometimes that such treasures were discovered by others than those that had deposited them. Sometimes, by reason of the death or the removal of the parties that had deposited treasures, the knowledge of them became lost, and perhaps the fields would pass into other hands than those of the original owners. In such circumstances a man that owned a field in which a treasure had been hidden would not know anything about it, and consequently he might be induced to sell the field if the full value of the land itself were offered to him.

Now let us suppose a case. Here is a field in which a treasure is hid, but the proprietor of the field knows nothing about it. Another man, who may be a servant engaged in some farm work in that field, or

another neighbour who happens to go through the field, discovers that there is a treasure hidden in the ground. He takes a rapid glance at it, and makes a rough estimate of its value. He finds it to be very precious, covers it up again and passes quickly away. Then he thinks and plans and meditates under the influence of his great desire to become the owner of that treasure. It is worth more than all the property which he now possesses ; and if he can secure it for himself it will be quite a fortune to him ; it will put an end to all his toil and trouble in securing the means of a comfortable livelihood. He warms up into a glow at the prospect of its becoming his own, and in his eagerness he comes to the following decision : He will sell all that he has. It will be about enough to pay for that field at its ordinary value. He will then buy that field and when it has become his own he will dig for the treasure and bring it home without attracting the attention of the neighbours. This is his plan. He adopts it ; he executes it ; and the treasure becomes his own.

This, saith Jesus, our heavenly and divine teacher, is a picture of the kingdom of heaven. That treasure signifies the great blessings of the gospel salvation, and that man is a picture of the sinner who finds these blessings.

So much, then, for a general opening up of the parable. I shall now, in dependence on the divine blessing, attempt a closer and more detailed exposition of it in the following order of particulars :

I. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A TREASURE. THE
TREASURE SIGNIFIES THE KINGDOM AND ITS
BLESSINGS

Will you endeavour with me to elevate and enlarge your conceptions of the preciousness of this heavenly treasure. (a) It is a treasure of knowledge. The inspired truth of God is the word of this kingdom, which makes known to us our relations to God by creation, preservation and redemption. We are God's creatures, over whom He holds a sceptre of sovereignty and dominion. He has given us laws and ordinances. But, alas, we have sinned against Him, and have come under His displeasure and the condemnation of His law. (b) But the kingdom of heaven is also a treasure of mercy and grace. God has shown mercy to His lost and fallen children on earth. He hath sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and to save the lost, and "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John iii : 16.) Grace is manifested in the kingdom, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, and the love of God which hath prompted Him to send Jesus into the world to save sinners. (c) The kingdom of heaven is a treasure of pleasures and joys at God's right hand, far superior to any which may be realized and enjoyed here at His footstool. This is the treasure to which Christian hope looks forward with patience and joy. "Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"

(Rom. v : 5), and it casts its anchor "within the veil whither the forerunner hath for us entered." (Heb. vi : 19,20), and where He has taken possession on behalf of all that put their trust in Him.

In short, the kingdom of heaven is a treasure of peace with God, deliverance from condemnation, the assurance of victory over Satan, the world and the flesh, and finally, a triumphant entrance into the city that hath "foundations whose builder and maker is God." In this kingdom there are riches for the poor, bread for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, rest for the weary, health for the sick, strength for the weak, and happiness for the afflicted and miserable. It is indeed a treasure that will compensate for the loss of every thing which it may be necessary for us to part with in order to win it ; while, on the other hand, nothing will compensate for the loss of him that loses it. What will the world, "the wealth of Olnus and of Ind," the pleasures of sense, the gratification of the lusts of the flesh, do for him that is destitute of an interest in the kingdom of heaven, in the day when Christ comes to make up His jewels ?

II. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO A TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

It is not only a treasure, but a hidden treasure. Many have often passed through the field and even searched for the treasure without finding it. There are many wise men after the flesh, many prudent men, many

sagacious men, that have never yet discovered this treasure, although they have often walked across the field in which it lies hidden. Many have read the Bible, have heard sermons, have come into contact with religion, have attended ordinances for years, that have not yet discovered the hidden treasure. How many failed to discover it in the days of our Lord Jesus Christ himself and in the days of His apostles ; how many failed to find it in the days of the Reformation, when Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Knox and Cranmer preached the everlasting gospel with such demonstration and power ; and in later days, when Whitefield and his cotemporaries laboured in the gospel to open men's eyes and to lead them to the discovery of the treasure. How many, oh, what multitudes, continued still in ignorance and blindness ! And when we come down to our own day, do we not find amongst us many that have never discovered the hidden treasure of knowledge and spiritual blessings and good hope, which is laid up in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

III. BUT THE PARABLE GOES ON TO SAY

that a man found the hidden treasure. It is not said that he was searching for it. Sometimes men did search for hidden treasures, but it is not said that this man did. Those who have written on hidden treasures, say that sometimes certain individuals became treasure-hunters, but such a class of men have never been very numerous in any country. At any rate, it is

not said in the parable that the man who found the treasure had been in search of it before he found it. Apparently he found it accidentally, as we would say. He lighted upon it either while he was walking across the field or while he was engaged in some work therein.

And here we have a picture of what has happened to some persons in connection with spiritual and eternal things. Some have found the great treasure of the kingdom of heaven while they were not seeking for it at all. Some have met with Christ's gospel and have found himself with all the blessings of His grace, as a man might by accident find a hidden treasure, that is, while they were not looking for any such thing. In this class of converts we may count the jailer who, all of a sudden, found in the message which the prisoners, Paul and Silas delivered to him, the rich treasure of the gospel salvation. Of this class also was the woman of Samaria, who found Christ while she was drawing water for the use of her household. And of this class are several whom we have read of, who came to the house of God without any set purpose to search for the treasure, or worse still, who came to annoy the worshippers and to disturb the service; but ere they departed their consciences were smitten, their thoughts were stirred within them, the Saviour was offered to them, and they accepted Him and rejoiced in the treasure which they had found. Several truthful records of such cases I have read,—records of persons who came, as we might say, to laugh, and went away to

pray. Now all such cases have their picture in the parable that is before us, and they are verifications of the scripture which says, "I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." (Rom x : 20.)

But let no one take encouragement in his carelessness, from the fact that some have found the hidden treasure in circumstances like those which I have just described. These things have taken place and are recorded, not to encourage a sinner in his carelessness, but to illustrate the rich mercy and the abounding grace of God. It is the duty of the sinner to "Seek the Lord while He may be found and call on Him while He is near," and when he does so he will find the Lord and His blessing; for "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. vii : 8.)

IV. LET US NOW CONSIDER THE FEELINGS

which were awakened in the man by finding the treasure. He had joy, but it was mingled with fear, joy at the prospect of being able to secure the treasure for himself, but fear lest anything should happen to blight his hope or to mar his prospects. So he hid the treasure at first; he let it be where it was that nobody might know that he had made such a discovery; and then with joy he took the necessary steps to secure possession of it.

And are not these very feelings awakened in the

hearts of men when they find the great treasure of the kingdom of heaven? They rejoice at the discovery which they make. But their joy is usually moderated by fear and anxiety lest anything should happen to deprive them of the treasure. Does it not often happen in the experience of young converts that they meditate in silence, and do not reveal to others the discovery which they have made, until they have taken further steps by repentance, faith and prayer, to reach a fuller conviction and a greater assurance that the heavenly treasure is their own?

Joy and anxiety mingled together become every convert. And not only so, but a mixture of these is not an unbecoming or unprofitable thing for the oldest and more advanced Christian, although it ought to be his experience as he makes progress in the divine life, that his fear and anxiety diminish and his peace and joy more and more abound. A mixture of joy and anxiety is favourable to secure a correct walk and conversation. It were not well that either the one or the other of them should become entirely eliminated or expunged from our experience during our pilgrimage here. A joy that crushes out anxiety altogether, becomes blind enthusiasm, while on the other hand, an anxiety and a fear that quench all joy, beget legal and lifeless obedience or blank and dark despair. The most pious and devoted of God's people in all ages have been the most eminent examples of the commingling of joy and anxiety, in their religious experi-

ence. Take Paul as a specimen: in him joy and anxiety, fear if you will, were commingled in a remarkable manner. He frequently expresses his own joy in the gospel, and often calls on others also to rejoice. Take the following passages as examples: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. . For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii : 1-3.) "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." (Phil. iv : 4.) On the other hand, take the following as an example of his fear and anxiety, in connection with his eternal prospects. By whom was deep anxiety ever more strongly expressed than it was by Paul in the following words: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainty; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." (I Cor. ix : 26, 27.)

V. WE COME NOW TO THE CONSIDERATION

of the course of action which his feelings prompted the man that found the hidden treasure, to pursue; he sold all that he had and bought that field.

Brown, the commentator, says, that by purchasing the field, itself and the treasure that was hid therein became his, according to the Jewish law. It may have been so, but that Jewish law I could not find out. The fact is, that different laws exist in different

countries respecting hidden treasures. According to the law of England and Scotland, those that find hidden treasures, whether in their own or in others' fields, are bound to reveal the discovery to the civil authorities ; and the treasure belongs to the Crown, but the finder gets the value of it in current money. Thompson, in "The Land and the Book," says on this parable, and especially in explanation of the purchasing of the field, " Many such transactions are still negotiated in secret. It is extremely difficult and even dangerous to remove treasure thus discovered in another's field ; but having purchased it, you can wait in safety, work in secret, and the coveted treasure is yours." These statements and the parable are in accordance with one another : having found the treasure, for joy thereof, the man selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.

Here then, are the feelings which were excited by the discovery of the treasure translated into action. For joy of the discovery, he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field. He found it necessary to part with everything that he had in order to secure the treasure, and he did part with what it was necessary to part with and secured the field and the treasure. Now that is what a true convert will do in regard to spiritual things. Not that we can, by anything which we may do or by anything which we possess, buy the blessings of the gospel, according to the literal and exact meaning of the word buying. We cannot buy the gospel blessings in the sense of giving an equiva-

lent for them ; for the blessings of salvation are offered as a gift. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v: 21.) But while we cannot buy them, there are many things to which we cleave in our sin and ignorance which are inconsistent with an interest in Jesus; with these we must part : we must give them all up, that the blessings of grace may be ours. It was thus that Paul acted as he tells us in the following words : "But what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. iii : 7-9.)

And here, let me indicate in a few particulars, things with which men must part if they wish to possess the hidden treasure of the heavenly kingdom.

First. They that find the treasure of the kingdom must part with sin. They must sell that, put it away, turn from it with full purpose of heart and endeavor after new obedience. The rule of the kingdom of heaven is, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." (Is. lv: 7.) To continue in sin is inconsistent with an interest in Jesus and with possession of the heavenly treasure;

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sin is an odious and filthy thing. God hates it, and He makes all His people hate it, and turn from it with endeavour after new obedience.

Again, He that finds the heavenly treasure must part with his own righteousness. He must sell that, let it go, renounce it. He may have been relying on that for acceptance with God, but now he sees it to be a filthy thing, and that he must no longer "go about to establish his own righteousness," but at once submit to "the righteousness of God." He finds it necessary to abandon all hope of acceptance with God on the ground of his own righteousness, and to rely entirely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for peace and pardon.

Further, He that finds the heavenly treasure and that wishes to make it his own, must part with the friendship of the world, and the social pleasures which are ordinarily derived from associating with the careless and the ungodly. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John ii : 15.) "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (Isa. iv : 4.)

And, whosoever wishes to be the owner of the heavenly treasure must be ready to make sacrifices, to endure trials, to bear afflictions and reproaches and to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ and His blessed gospel. "It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead

with Him, we shall also live with Him ; if we suffer we shall also reign with Him ; if we deny Him, He will deny us." (II Tim. ii: 11, 12.)

Now, my audience, you have heard this short and beautiful parable explained, and here I ask you, how do you stand individually and personally by comparison with it ? I suppose there are here three classes.

First, Let me suppose that some are here who have found the heavenly treasure, who have apprehended its value, and have parted with the world, the devil and sin, and their own righteousness, that the treasure might be their own. To you I say, prize highly the treasure which you have found, and live and act up to the rank which you attained. You have not yet thoroughly understood the preciousness of the treasure which you have found. It will take an eternity of calculation and enjoyment to know it all. He that has this treasure is rich indeed, though he may be poor in every other respect ; and he that is destitute of this treasure, is certainly poor, though he were owner of the wealth of Crœsus or proprietor of the mines of Golconda. And as to the rank which you have obtained, it is a noble and elevated rank. You have become "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii: 17.) I beseech you live and act in a manner worthy of your rank. Remember your present rank and your high destinies of the future, and quit you like men. Walk by faith and not by sight and let your conversation be in heaven.

Again, I suppose there are here some that have not made any discovery at all respecting this treasure. You have from your infancy been in the neighborhood of it, you have even walked and worked in the field in which it is hidden, but you have not seen anything of it. You have read the Bible, you have read and heard sermons, but they have made little or no impression upon you. Your treasure is the world and the things that are in it. You are satisfied with its varieties and its pleasures, and you live in utter disregard of God and your souls, and Christ, and heaven, and spiritual and eternal things. I beseech you, cast off your lethargy and indifference. Stir up your thoughts. Search for the hidden treasure. Great issues depend on your existence here and on the fact that the gospel has been preached to you. Awake to seriousness ; seek the Lord ; seek peace ; seek an interest in Jesus. Search for the hidden treasure.

And, *lastly*, I suppose there are here some of whom it may be said, that they have found the treasure, that is, they have found out where it is ; they have understood something about it. They know the field in which it lies concealed ; but they have never bought it ; they have never made the treasure their own. They have found out that it was necessary to part with many things, to sell many things, which they now have, ere they could become owners of the treasure. And they have thought the sacrifices too great, and have not therefore made the necessary purchase.

Sin and its pleasures; the world and its treasures; Satan and his service, are too precious in their estimation to part with them for Christ. Alas! that it should be so. O, I beseech you, persist no longer in this ruinous policy. Decide for Christ and the blessings of His salvation. Cleave to Him whatever else you may have to lose. Amen. N. McK.

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DISCOURSE IX.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Matt. xiii: 45, 46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Ps. xix: 8-11; Ps. cxxxix: 17-20; Ps. xxxvi: 5-9. Read Prov. iii, or Job xxviii.

APEARL is a hard smooth shining body, usually of a roundish shape, which is found chiefly in certain testaceous fish of the oyster kind. Pearls are of different sizes and colors; the larger ones approach the figure of a pear in shape, but it is seldom that one is found, that approaches a pear in size. Good ones are of the size of a pea; but some are occasionally found that are an inch in length; and I have read of one that measured two inches in length and four inches in circumference, and that weighed eighteen hundred grains.

It is not thoroughly understood how pearls are formed within the shells of the pearl oyster; for they are not a necessary and constituent part of the fish within whose shells they grow; neither are they found in all the animals of the species.

In accounting for their formation, it is supposed that grains of sand accidentally find their way into the in-

side of the shells of the pearl oysters, and that around these grains of sand a secretion from the body of the animals gradually increases and hardens into pearls.

The ornamental parts of the handles of knives and other articles of that kind, which we usually call pearl, are not the real and precious pearl at all, but the shells of the pearl oyster, which are called by dealers mother-of-pearl. These shells are very valuable, though not at all as precious as the pearls themselves. And there is an enormous trade in these shells going on. They are found wherever there are pearl fisheries, but chiefly on the coasts of Ceylon, Manilla, Cuba, Panama and the South Sea Islands. About 3,000 tons of these shells are imported annually into England alone, the value of which is £100,000 ; and they are manufactured into ornamental inlayings in wood work, and into pearl buttons, which are chiefly made in Birmingham.

But pearls are much more precious than the mother-of-pearl ; and there has been a trade in them also going on in the world at least for the last two thousand years. The Ceylon pearl fishery, the most famous pearl fishery in the world, has been in active operation during that time. Its locality is a bank about twenty miles long, which is situated about ten or twelve miles from the shore, on the north-west coast of the Island. The fishery is carried on under government regulations ; and during the season of it a great number of boats are employed ; and great multitudes of people assemble there from different parts of the

world. The pearl oysters are caught by divers who sink to the bottom by means of a rope and a stone, and gather, each time, as many oysters as they can, as long as they can hold their breath under the water, which is on an average about sixty seconds or one minute. Each boat has usually ten divers besides the crew. When a boat is full they return to the shore and pile the oysters up in heaps, and leave them there for a while to die and rot. They then wash out the shells and search for the pearls. After assorting and polishing them, the pearls come into the hands of the pearl merchants, some of whom are there on the spot, to make their bargains, and to carry or send home the pearls which they buy, that they may sell them again at an advanced price.

It is at this point in this pearl business that our parable comes in. And here let me suppose a case. A merchant has left home at the season of the pearl fishing, in search of goodly pearls. He knows that they are valuable and that trading in them is a profitable business. A good string of the ordinary kind might be worth about £8,000. It is said that a certain English nobleman, in the days of Elizabeth, had one pearl that was worth £15,000; and that Cleopatra dissolved and swallowed a pearl which was valued at £80,729 sterling. Now, our merchant is in search of goodly pearls. He would be satisfied with a number of the more ordinary kind, but he has found one of extraordinary value, the like of which he had no expec-

tation of ever seeing or securing for himself. He sees that it will make him enormously rich, if he can secure it. He can buy it as raw material, as we would say, at a certain price, and he can sell it again to some nobleman, for an ornament, at an enormous profit. But it is so valuable that the price which he must pay for it is more than all the money which he possesses. In order to secure it he must sell all that he has, he must convert all his property into money. But he does not hesitate at this; his mind is made up; he will sell all that he has, and will buy that precious pearl, for he can sell it again at home at an enormous profit and be at once rich. He executes his plan and the pearl becomes his own.

Now, says our Lord Jesus Christ, the kingdom of heaven is like unto this man and the business which he has transacted. This narrative of his search after pearls and of his success in purchasing one of great price, is a picture of the kingdom of heaven. Let us now consider this parable in detail.

I. THIS ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE WHICH THE MERCHANT FOUND SIGNIFIES THE LORD JESUS CHRIST;

it is a figure or image of Him. And if we examine the case closely, we shall find several points of resemblance between the pearl and Christ.

First, Pearls are bright shining bodies, which are used for ornaments on account of their beauty.

And is not Christ also bright, shining, beautiful,

and glorious? To the world in its ignorance, to men in their blindness and unbelief, He is as a "root out of a dry ground," there is no "form nor comeliness" in Him that they should seek Him, nor "beauty that they should desire Him." But in reality and to all that have knowledge and sense to appreciate Him, He is glorious in holiness, He is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely." He is "fairer than the children of men." "Grace hath been poured into His lips," and God "hath blessed Him for ever." He is the "rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley," the "bright and morning star," and the "sun of righteousness."

And in this respect Jesus Christ is the pattern which His people must follow and the model after which they must be fashioned and moulded. He came not only to die for men and to purchase redemption, but also to show to them what moral beauty and spiritual excellency are and how they may attain them. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," nor is any man holy by nature. But the gospel of Christ has been revealed to make men holy. Those that know it and accept it as God's plan for saving their souls, come under its sanctifying influences; and whether the period of time during which the process lasts be short or long, the ultimate issue shall be that they shall become bright and lustrous with the beauty of holiness.

Second. The pearl which this man found was a

pearl of great price. It was a very precious pearl, so precious that it was necessary for him to sell all that he had before he could buy it.

And is not Christ also very precious? He is precious in the sight of God, the Father; He is His "beloved Son." He is precious in the sight of all the angels of heaven, for they worship and adore Him, and they desire to look into the wondrous plan, and the great work by which He has wrought out salvation for the children of men. And He is also precious to all His believing people. Peter says, in one of his epistles, "Unto you that believe He is precious." (I Peter ii: 7.) His blood is called, "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter i: 19.)

Oh, my hearers, let your eyes rest, and let your minds meditate, upon this blessed idea of the preciousness of the Great Redeemer. His person is precious, His life was precious, His doctrines are precious, His death was precious, His resurrection and ascension were precious, and His intercession at God's right hand is precious. He is precious as Prophet to teach us, as Priest to atone for our sins, and as King to subdue and govern us, and to conquer and restrain all our enemies. He is, in a word, so precious, that He is to the believer all his salvation and all his desire, all that his soul needs, both for time and for eternity. He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and He is "of God, made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

Third. The one pearl of great price was alone sufficient for the merchant who found it. When he found it, he gave up all other pearls, and all other possessions, and this one alone engrossed his thoughts, filled his desires as a pearl merchant, and was the only article on which he centred his business energies and regards.

And, in like manner, Christ is alone sufficient for the sinner's wants and necessities. He alone, as a Saviour, as a ground of trust and confidence in approaching God, must engross the thoughts, awaken and fill the affections of the children of men. Christ will be our only Saviour, or He will not be our Saviour at all. He is the one Mediator, and whosoever wishes to approach God must approach Him through this one Mediator. As the apostle says, "There is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus." (I Tim. ii : 5.) Nor will He share the honor of being our Mediator with any saint or angel, as the Roman Catholics teach. They have many mediators, such as the Virgin Mary, and St. Peter, and St. Paul, and a host of other saints. But to us there is only one Mediator, even the Lord Jesus, God's only Son, the "Apostle and the High Priest of our profession," who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." And He alone is sufficient for us. His death was a sufficient atonement for our sins; His righteousness is a sufficient covering from the condemnation of the law;

His power is a sufficient defence in the day of trouble, and His intercession is a sufficient vindication for us in the sight of God ; and whosoever finds Him, finds the one thing needful, which should engross all his thoughts, satisfy all his desires, draw out all his affections, and make him rejoice for the Pearl of great price which he has found.

Such, then, is a sketch of the meaning of the pearl in this parable. And if the pearl of great price signifies Jesus in the richness of His grace, as the Saviour of men, it will not be difficult for us to determine who is meant by the merchantman.

II. THE MERCHANT SIGNIFIES THE SINNER

who seeks and finds Jesus Christ for his soul's salvation. The merchant is an image, or picture of a saved sinner.

First, Here first notice that this merchant was seeking goodly pearls. It is at this point that this parable most obviously differs from the parable of the hidden treasure, the parable which is recorded in the verse which immediately precedes my text, and of which I gave you an exposition not long since. Indeed, these two parables may be said to be similar, and to coincide at all other points but this. Their lines run parallel except at this point, namely, that the merchant was seeking goodly pearls, but the man who found the hidden treasure is not represented at all as having been in search of it. It is not said that he was in

search of it ; and in my exposition of the parable, I viewed him as making the discovery of the treasure while he was not in search of any such thing ; and, consequently, I took him to be a figure, or image of those who find Jesus Christ and salvation while they are not searching for Him, and whose conversion and reconciliation to God are verifications of the scripture, which saith, " I was found of them that sought Me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me." (Rom. x : 20.)

The merchant was seeking goodly pearls when he found the one pearl of great price. And he therefore signifies those who are awakened to a sense of their spiritual wants and necessities, and who set about the work of seeking peace with God, forgiveness of sins, and a title to the kingdom of glory, and who are kept for a longer or shorter period in this state of conviction, awakening and anxiety ere they find Jesus, and obtain peace through His name. In the words of the Rev. William Arnot : " It is not precisely the case of a man who finds the kingdom of God when he is seeking something else ; neither is it the case of a man who first thoroughly knows the worth of that kingdom, and then sets out in search of it. There is no such example. No man knows its worth before he obtains it. The merchant knew the value of the pearls, and set out in search of them ; but such a pearl as that which he had found he had never seen before, and never expected to see. So, although a man has

some spiritual perceptions and spiritual desires : although, by a deliberate judgment, he determines to seek the life eternal in preference to all the business and pleasures of the world, he does not, at the outset, understand how exceeding rich the forgiving grace of God is. Nay, he thinks, when he first begins his search for salvation, that it may be accomplished by the union of many attainments, such as men may possess. Precious pearls, and a number of them indeed, but still such pearls as he had often seen in the possession of other merchants, and such as, in former times, he has had in his own store. He goes out, with cash in hand, to buy pearls, but he leaves his house and land still his own. He expects to acquire many excellent pearls, and retain all his property besides. He did not conceive of one that should be worth all that he had, until he saw it. It is thus that people under convictions set out in search of something that will make them right before God. They want to get righteousness, and temperance, and a good case for the judgment to come." Thus they search and seek for many days, it may be, for many years. But, at last, they find the gospel ; they find Jesus, and in Him, the blessings of a free and full salvation. In Him they find peace with God ; in Him they find a full remission of all their sins ; in Him they find peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, grace to help them in every time of need, and a clear and sufficient title to the heavenly inheritance, and to the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Of this class were the Eunuch, Bunyan, McPhail, the minister of Resolis, in Scotland, and Luke Heywood, the soldier of Tort.

Second. Consider, now, the course of action which the merchant pursued when he found the pearl of great price: "He went and sold all that he had and bought it." The word "went" leaves room for the supposition that he returned home to convert all the available property which he possessed into money, that he might have enough wherewith to buy the one pearl of great price. We are not to suppose that he was careless about his property, or that he valued his possessions little. He may have been the owner of large possessions, possessions which he may have inherited from his forefathers, and to which he himself may have made considerable additions by his own frugality, energy and industry. But his overwhelming sense of the superior value of the one pearl which he had found, did not allow him to hesitate a moment, but made him readily sell all that he had that he might buy that one pearl.

Now, the lessons from this part of the parable are exactly the same lessons which I drew from the conduct of the man who found the hidden treasure. He, too, sold all that he had and bought the field in which the hidden treasure lay concealed. Here the two parables coincide. And I scarcely need go over the same lessons again, at such a short period of time from the date of the preceding discourse on the para-

ble of the hidden treasure. But, as the lessons are so important, which these coincident points of the two parables teach, and as it may be feared that some of you may have already forgotten these lessons, I must sketch them again.

1. We are not to understand from the buying and the selling that we can purchase salvation in the sense of giving an equivalent for it. We cannot thus buy salvation. We cannot establish a claim to it by our merits, or our doings. God has, therefore, in mercy to our souls, provided it for us as a free gift. He offers it to us without money and without price, and yet there is a sense in which we have to sell all that we have that we may buy it. In the strict sense of buying and earning, we can neither buy nor earn salvation, for "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi : 23.)

2. We are to learn from this parable, as well as from many other passages of the word of God, that there are many things which we cannot retain along with an interest in Jesus Christ, but with which we must part. For instance, we must part with sin ; we must renounce our own righteousness as a ground of acceptance with God, and we must reject the friendship of the world, and the pleasures and enjoyments that are derivable from full association with the impenitent and the ungodly. These, and such as these, we must sell, part with, put away, that we may rely on Jesus, and on Him alone for salvation, as He is freely

offered to us in the gospel. "There is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved." He is the pearl of great price.

3. Further, we learn from this parable that when a sinner has had a spiritual apprehension of Christ, when he has really found Him, and understood His worth, he will not hesitate, but will readily sell, give up, renounce all that he has that he may have Christ. It was thus that Paul "counted all things but loss that he might win Christ." (Phil. iii : 8.) It was thus that indeed all the true converts of the early times of the gospel "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Heb. x : 34.) And it is thus that enlightened Christians in every age act, who give up all other grounds of confidence, and cleave to Christ alone for salvation.

IN CONCLUSION :

First, a few words to those that have found the pearl of great price. I congratulate you on the success which has attended your spiritual activity and industry. You became sensible of your need of something that might afford you comfort and joy in looking up to God and in the prospect of death and the judgment. And although at first you did not realize the truth that there existed one pearl of great price which would answer all your wants, yet you went out on an expedition of spiritual inquiry. You considered your position, you studied

the scriptures, you listened with interest and earnestness to the preaching of the gospel ; you approached the throne of grace, and in various ways you made anxious search and careful inquiry, till at last you found the pearl of great price, Jesus Christ the Son of God. You were enabled to understand, in some measure at least, His great excellencies, His sufficiency and preciousness as Saviour. You were enabled to see that it would be a great bargain to win Him, to buy Him, to have Him for your own Saviour, even at the sacrifice of everything else that it might be necessary for you to lose ; and you have resolved to cleave to Him and to follow Him in the face of obloquy and of danger. I beseech you hold fast what you have obtained. Keep the profession which you have made. Rejoice in the blessings which you have found. Prize highly the heavenly pearl. Be much engaged in thoughts of its value. Jesus is indeed a pearl of great price. Think of the dignity and glory of His person, the value of His death, the prevalency of His intercession, and the sublimity and grandeur of the revelation which He has given us of God, and of the glory of the inheritance which He has prepared for His people, and let your walk and conversation be such as become the profession which you make of love and attachment to Him.

Secondly, a few words to those who, it may be, are seeking goodly pearls, but have not yet found the pearl of great price. This parable is calculated to encourage you in the search in which you are engaged. Give not

up that search. Inquire, meditate, study. Let not the things of earth any longer engross all your thoughts and attention, but attend to spiritual things.

It is doubtless reason for sorrow that you have not yet found the pearl of great price, seeing that many efforts have been made to exhibit it before your eyes, and to make you apprehend its excellencies. In the Bible and in the preaching of the gospel, Jesus the pearl of great price has been set before you. He has been set before you, as it were, crucified amongst you. The Son of God has been revealed to you in the word and ordinances, and it is sad if your eyes have been hitherto blinded. This calls for a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation.

But at the same time it is a hopeful sign that you are sensible of your need of something to bring you into right spiritual relations, and to prepare you for death and eternity. It is a good thing that you have seen your spiritual poverty, and that you are seeking goodly pearls. And now let me announce to you that no number of goodly pearls will serve your purpose if you have not the one pearl of great price. Open your eyes now and see Him. See the Son of God whom the Father hath sent forth to be "a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii: 25.) "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i: 29.) See the precious pearl. See the Son of God who became man, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," who died to atone

for our sins and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. See Him, adore Him, believe in Him and love Him. Can there be any insurmountable obstacle between you and an apprehension of the pearl of great price? O cast your eye upon Him; appreciate His excellencies, understand His glorious mission, accept His grace and rejoice in His love.

Yarmouth, Aug. 1873.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE X.

THE LABORERS.

Matt. xx : 1-16. Ps. cxlv : 9-15 ; Ps. cxix : 129-133 ; Par. xlvi : 1.

THERE is a connection between this parable and the preceding context. A young man came to Christ to inquire about the way of salvation. Christ spoke to him about keeping the commandments and advised him to sell all that he had. This he was not prepared to do, and he went away sorrowful. Whereupon Jesus made the observation that it is hard for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Then Peter said, "We have left all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?" In His reply to this inquiry Jesus enunciates two great principles, first, all that have made sacrifices for Christ and His cause shall be fully rewarded ; and secondly, "many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Nothing less than a full reward shall be given to any, but at the same time, in dealing with some God will exercise a broad and sovereign generosity. It was to illustrate this sovereign generosity of God in making awards to His servants that the parable which I am about to explain was spoken. And in attempting to open up this parable in dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit

I. I OBSERVE THAT THE HOUSEHOLDER SIGNIFIES GOD.

In one aspect of the revelation which God makes of Himself in the gospel, He is like this householder. This householder went out to hire laborers, and he bargained with them concerning what they were to do for him and concerning wages which he would give them. And he went out at different times of the day and gave work and wages to men whom he found idle in the market-place. And thus it is, that God in one aspect of the gospel deals with men. He finds in this world men that are idle, doing nothing to prepare for eternity, making no preparation for the world to come; He calls them into His service and He gives them a reward, a full reward for the service which they render.

II. I OBSERVE THAT THE VINEYARD SIGNIFIES

the sphere of service into which God calls His people by the gospel.

Isaiah uses the vineyard as a figure of the Church of God. He says in chap. 5th of his prophecies, 'Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching His vineyard. My well-beloved hath vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein, and He looked that it

should bring forth grapes and it brought forth wild grapes." Indeed the vine and the vineyard are frequently used in the scriptures as figures of spiritual things. Much of the riches of the land of Canaan consisted in the product of vineyards. And extensive vineyards required a great deal of labor to make them reach a high degree of productiveness. The vines must be supported and framed, and grapes must be collected and pressed into wine. And therefore owners of extensive vineyards often had occasion to hire servants to do their work.

And in the same way God has a sphere of labor into which He brings His people. And the labor which He requires of them is obedience to His law in the various relations of life, together with a patient and diligent waiting on Himself in the different ordinances and institutions of worship which He has appointed. He calls his servants to labor in His vineyard, to labor for the advancement of His cause in the earth. He calls them to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He calls them, not to a life of idleness and inactivity, but to a life of struggle and conflict and labor. He calls them to fight the good fight of faith, to fight against the world, the devil and the flesh.

III. I OBSERVE THAT THE HIRING OF THE LABORERS

signifies the preaching of the gospel, the circulation of the scriptures, and indeed the use of the various means and appliances which He has appointed in His house,

for the ingathering of sinners into the fold of Jesus Christ.

The parable tells us that the husbandman or householder went out in the morning, and at the third, the ninth and the eleventh hours of the day, to hire laborers. With the first company he agreed for a penny a day, and to the others he promised in a general way what would be equal and right.

Childhood
Youth
Maturity
Old age

These different hours of the day—the morning, the third hour, which corresponds to our nine o'clock in the morning, and the ninth hour and the eleventh hour, which corresponds respectively to our three o'clock and five o'clock in the afternoon—these different hours signify the different periods of human life at which conversion takes place. Some people are called by the gospel and they answer the call and enter into the service of God while they are young, others when they have reached maturity, others when they are in middle life, others when they are old or when they are drawing near the end of their career on earth.

And here is encouragement to any that are anxious about their soul's salvation, any that have not yet entered into the vineyard of God, but would like to do so now. Whether you are young or old, hearken to the proposal of the householder, the great householder God, who calls you into His service, that you may obtain wages and make a proper preparation for the day of final account. Why stand you here idle? God calls you; He has come forth to hire laborers; answer His call and you will get that which is just and equal.

Observe, specially, that you are as if you were idle while you have not answered the gospel call. You are idle as to preparation for another world. You may be busy enough attending to the affairs of this life, yea, you may be diligent in your efforts to live a quiet, decent and honorable life among your fellow-creatures; but it will all go for nothing in the day of judgment unless you answer the gospel call, unless you believe in Christ and come to God by Him.

And are there not some here who are yet standing idle in the market-place? I ask you, why do you stand here idle? Why do you stand aloof from Christ, and His cause and His people? You have been standing idle a long time, and the householder, that is, God, by His word, by the preaching of the gospel, has been inviting you into His vineyard. Why have you refused His call? Why have you declined His invitation so long? Why do you remain idle? In regard to spiritual matters and religious duties, are there not many here that have remained hitherto in idleness? You are here that are idle. Is it faith in Jesus that we ask you to exercise? You are idle, for you have not believed. Is it repentance that we ask you to exercise? You are idle, for you have not repented. Is it prayer that we ask you to engage in with all earnestness and diligence at the throne of God? You are idle, for you have not yet learned to pray. Is it self-denial that we call on you to exercise yourselves in, if you wish to be the true

*idle
before
Initation
+ after*

followers of Christ? You are idle, for you do not know what self-denial means. Yes, many are to be found in this community who do not know the alphabet, the mere elements of self-denial. For they can drink, and carouse, and curse, and swear, and slander, and enjoy sinful pleasures, and keep company with the giddy, and the careless, and the profane. Yes, many are idle in regard to spiritual matters, and as to preparation for another world. O, ye idle ones, why stand ye idle? If you thus continue to neglect, or refuse the call of God, you shall reap the fruits of your idleness. In the name of the Master of the great spiritual vineyard, I beseech you, stand no longer idle in the market-place. Come into His vineyard, and you shall receive a full reward, yea, and more than a full reward, for all that you can do in His service. He is a liberal and generous Master, and none shall serve Him in vain.

Observe, again, that you need not be discouraged by the length of time during which you have remained idle. The householder in the parable went out at different hours of the day, and hired laborers for His vineyard. And so it is that God calls sinners, and will receive them at different periods of human life. Are you young? Do not put off entering into God's vineyard until you are old. You may never be old. Enter now. Come and begin religious duties at once. Believe now; repent now. Begin to pray without delay, and decline no duty to which Christ calls you.

Are you old? Do not fold your hands in idleness and in despair. Even at the eleventh hour God receives some. Examples of a late repentance are not indeed numerous in the scriptures, that men may not presume to delay the work of repenting and serving God; but there is enough to keep him, whose life is far spent, or whose death is evidently drawing near, from despairing, if he is even now, at the eleventh hour, anxious to enter into the vineyard of God and be saved. The thief on the cross is an example of a late saving repentance, and this parable runs in the line of the case of the thief, and in its own way proclaims that God is willing to receive penitent, returning sinners, even at the eleventh hour. Come, then, my hitherto idle hearer, come into the vineyard. Whether you are at the third, or ninth, or eleventh hour of your life, be not discouraged, but come, come and trust the generosity of the blessed God who calls you, that He will give you what will be just and equal.

IV. I OBSERVE THAT THE ACT

of settling with the laborers when the day's work was over represents the act of God reckoning with his servants at the last day, and giving to each his reward.

(a) A steward was employed by the householder to settle with the laborers. In like manner God will judge His people by that Man whom He hath ordained and appointed for that work, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. God shall come, as the Psalmist says, and

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command all His saints to be gathered unto Him, even all that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice (Ps. 1: 5), and then will He give unto them the rewards of His grace.

(b) The principle of the reckoning shall be the grace and generosity of God. The master in the parable gives to the last that was hired a day's wages as well as to the first that was employed. He had a right to do what he would with his own. And while he gave to those that wrought during the whole day what they had bargained for, there were no injustice done to them when the others received more than they had earned.

(c) The parable goes on to say that those that had wrought the longest complained as if injustice had been done them. Now we are not to suppose that at the last day there will be complaints of this kind made by the saints against God, for the awards that shall be made to them. The parable is for instruction to believers while they are here, to check in them a mercenary spirit, such as that which prompted Peter's question when he said to Christ, "We have left all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?" The parable was delivered to check this mercenary spirit, and to teach believers to trust God for the reward which He shall give to them.

Let us now gather some closing lessons from the parable and the exposition which we have given of it. And

First, Let us learn to guard against conceiving

and cherishing a proud appreciation of ourselves. If we wish to be exalted we must be humble. It was the spirit of a proud appreciation of themselves that led the Jews, who rejected our Lord, to ruin. "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased." (Matt. xxiii : 12.)

Second.—We must be on our guard against grudging to others the blessings which the Lord confers upon them. Such grudging cannot arise from a truly gracious spirit. Or, at any rate, if a true believer indulges in it to any extent, it must so far be a blemish in his character. It ill becomes us; let us avoid it.

Third.—That we may be able to check the proud spirit that would lead us to esteem ourselves highly and to despise others or grudge to them the blessings which they receive from God, let us cherish a firm conviction that whatever God does is right, and that although we may not see a reason for the way in which He dispenses His favors, yet there is a reason for all that He does. He does not give an account of His matters, He does not need to do so, nevertheless, He doeth all things well. The righteous Judge of the whole earth shall do right. Let us firmly believe this.

Fourth.—The true spirit of a disciple and steward of Jesus is love to Jesus Himself and the cause which is His. The great motive that should animate us is His service, is our love to Him for what He has done and suffered for us. We cannot indeed but be actuated by a variety of motives, but the chief motive should be

our love to Jesus, who loved us and who gave Himself for us. Let us love Him because He first loved us and let us serve Him because we love Him.

Fifth.—Let us remember that all who profess to be Christ's should be workers in His vineyard. I beseech you, my hearers, shrink not from the service to which Jesus calls you. He calls you to work in His vineyard. And the work which He appoints for you is that which is involved in keeping His commandments in the various relations of life; in crucifying your own corrupt natures; in resisting the devil, and in keeping yourselves pure from the contamination of the world, and all this by the grace of His Spirit in you.

Lastly.—If God has placed you in a last place now or in what appears to you to be a last, or inferior place, do not murmur against His dealings with you; don't complain, nor think that you cannot serve Him. You can serve him in afflictions, in disappointments, in poverty, and even when your talents and opportunities seem to be few or small. Whatever your portion or talents, you can still in some way serve the Lord if you are animated by love, or the spirit of a true and humble disciple. Take meekly and thankfully what the Lord sends. Hide not even one talent.

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DISCOURSE XI.

THE TWO SONS.

Matt. xxi: 28-32: "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of these twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, the first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward that ye might believe him."

WONDERFUL was the wisdom wherewith Jesus confounded and silenced the chief priests and the elders of the people. They came to Him demanding of Him by what authority He had expelled those that sold and bought in the temple, and healed the blind and the lame that resorted to Him. Instead of answering them directly, He asked them whence was the baptism of John, whether from heaven or of men. This at once threw them into a serious and embarrassing dilemma. Should they say, "from heaven," then they would be exposed to the charge of rebellion against God for not believing the message which John had brought to them; and should they say "of men," then they would be exposed to the indignation of the

people in whose estimation John was a great prophet. They therefore, in utter helplessness and desperation, replied, "We cannot tell." And He said unto them, "Neither tell I you, by what authority I do these things." Here certainly was a great discomfiture for these cavillers, and a splendid triumph for our blessed Lord.

But Jesus does not thus leave them confounded and silenced ; he improves His victory ; and by means of the parable which I have read for the subject of our present meditations, He makes them acknowledge their own disobedience and impertinence. This we shall see more fully in the sequel ; but in the mean time, let me remark, that we have here certainly an evidence of Christ's intellectual superiority over shrewd and sagacious men ; nay, more, this simple circumstance looks in the direction of Christ's superhuman and divine powers. Surely an individual, sprung from an inferior rank in society, that could thus silence and confound keen and learned men must have possessed more than human shrewdness and sagacity ; and the triumph which Christ has won points, not obscurely, to the truth of His claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah whom the Jews expected.

Let us now look at the parable :

" But what think ye? A certain man had two sons : and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard."

This parable is evidently constructed on the habits

and practices of what I may call in modern phrase, the middle classes of society. In Judea, as among ourselves, there was a class of poor people who lived either on the bounty of others, or on wages which they themselves earned as laborers on the estates of the rich and the opulent. There was also a class of rich people who owned broad acres and extensive vineyards, which were tilled and dressed by the hands of laborers hired in the market places : and there was also a middle class of husbandmen who owned small estates, for the cultivation of which they depended chiefly on their own industry and the obedient industry of their children.

To this middle class the man in the parable belonged. Happy man, if his sons had been dutiful and obedient as they ought to have been ! And highly favored and happy must that country be whose population is largely composed of this class of agriculturists. The highest and the lowest classes, or the hopelessly poor and the enormously rich, are mutually dangerous. The poor are exposed to danger from the oppression and the rapacity of the rich, whilst the rich are exposed to danger from the envy and the jealousy of the poor. But the middle class are not exposed to any special danger from the surrounding community, the greatest danger to their peace, and comfort and happiness arises from the waywardness and disobedience of their own children. Fathers, I beseech you, awaken to a sense of the responsibility that rests upon you. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

But look in this parable, at the father's request and the first son's reply : "Son," says this father, "go, work to-day in my vineyard." Surely it was a reasonable request and it was affectionately and kindly made. What course of action or line of conduct could be more reasonable for the son on his part, than compliance with this request. It comes from his own father, to whom God has given authority over him ; who has a right to his love and obedience ; on whom the cares of the household rest; and who is filled with great anxiety to provide a comfortable and competent living for his family. But while we wait to hear the son's respectful and obedient answer, and to see him move away to engage heartily in the work assigned to him, we are astonished to hear the discourteous and rude reply, "I will not." The kind father's just request meets with a flat and bold refusal. And it is very likely that he had received similar replies from that quarter before. Ordinarily, rudeness and disobedience in children are not the products of a day. They are things of gradual development and daily growth. The father does not seem to have made any reply to that flat refusal of his disobedient son. It may be that he knew from past experience that a remonstrance or parley would only make matters worse. He probably sighed from a heavy heart and walked silently away.

But, by and bye, a change happily takes place in the lad's mind : he repents and goes away to work in his father's vineyard. The text says, "Afterward he re-

repented and went." How it was that his thoughts revolved and better feelings came to take the place of the hateful sentiments of disobedience, we are not told. We are only told that afterward he repented and went. His reply to his father's reasonable request was wicked and rebellious. Murky clouds floated in his mental firmament, but they fled away, driven by the hand of some mystic power, and warmth and brilliant sunshine took their place. And then proper thoughts and feelings within acted on, obedient hands and feet without ; he went into the vineyard and wrought, very probably with more than ordinary diligence to make amends for the insult which he had offered to his father.

But there was a second son ! Look at him. The father came to him and addressed to him the same words in which he had spoken to the first son, viz. : "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I go, sir." A proper and respectful enough reply surely. Here is apparently a polite and civil youth. He pays deference to his father's words, and probably for the moment he has no intention of acting the part of a disobedient son. But alas ! although he has made a fair promise, he does not fulfil it : his obedience was only in words and not in deeds : "he went not." His lips uttered smooth and pleasant words, but his heart was wrong. His goodness was "as a morning cloud and as the early dew which passeth away." (Hosea vi: 4.) Whatever momentary inclination he might have felt to obey his father while the

sound of his words were in his ears, was soon overborne by the laziness and the general worthlessness of character which cleaved to him. We are not told that any special temptation came in his way that morning, to divert him from the task which his father had assigned to him ; neither are we told that he changed his mind from a good intention to a bad one. The supposition is therefore reasonable and natural, that this day he was pursuing a line of action which was in harmony with the general tenor of his indifferent character and unfilial conduct. He was a man of profession but not of performance. "He said, I go, sir, and went not."

Such is the parable. Let us now look at its application. Like Nathan the prophet who by means of the parable of the pet lamb, made David pronounce a severe judgment on his own guilty conduct, the Lord Jesus by means of the parable that is before us, makes the chief priests and elders of the people confess, that the publicans and the harlots were more obedient to the message which God had sent to them, than they themselves were. Jesus asked them, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father ? They say unto him, the first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not ; but the publicans and the harlots believed him ; and ye when ye had seen it repented not afterwards that ye might believe him." Here then is the explanation

and the application of the parable. The first son who rudely and disrespectfully returned a blunt refusal to his father's request, represents the publicans and the harlots, and the second son who made the fair promise but did not fulfil it, represents the chief priests and the elders of the people. The first son was rude and disobedient and openly rebellious. He made no effort to hide the disobedient disposition that was in him. He flatly and bluntly declared his spirit of disobedience and insubordination to his father's face. And in this respect he was a picture of the publicans and the harlots, two classes of people that were openly and daringly ungodly.

The publicans were the tax gatherers, who possessed great facilities for practising extortion and oppression on the people. And that which gave them an opportunity to be extortionate was the practice on the part of the government to sell the taxes of a province to an individual or a company, and then furnish that individual or company with power to levy the taxes on the people according to wide and general regulations that enabled them to collect a great deal more than they paid to the government; in short, according to regulations that gave them every facility to oppress the poor and to practise extortion on all classes. And because the policy of the government in regard the taxes was such as to afford facilities for the publicans to enrich themselves, it was natural for those that had loose and easy consciences and the disposition to

be extortionate to practise injustice. Hence this class of public servants became notorious for their rapacity and were very odious to the people.

Such were the publicans ; and the harlots were a class of women who boldly and publicly violated the laws of chastity and sold their bodies for the gratification of the passions of lustful and lecherous men. Hence they were under the ban of society.

Now these were the classes that are represented by the first son, in his rudeness and disobedience. But the first son repented and went to the vineyard to work there in accordance with the request of his father. The publicans and the harlots also believed and repented under the ministry of John, and consequently became interested in the kingdom of God.

The second son was polite and respectful in the presence of his father, but nevertheless he disobeyed his command. He said "I go, sir, and went not." He was a man of words, but not of deeds ; a man of promise, but his promise proved false. And in this respect he was a picture of the chief priests and elders who pretended to be very religious and very anxious to obey God and to do Him service, but when John came to them bearing a message from God, they rejected him. They saw that John's ministry was the means of bringing to repentance and reformation even publicans and harlots, and even that evidence of his mission from God they resisted. Christ came in fulfilment of John's words respecting the Messiah, and Him

they also rejected and persecuted. Hence Christ says to them, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye when ye had seen it repented not afterwards that ye might believe him."

But it is a narrow and contracted view of the passage to confine its application to the classes of people that are here specified. These classes have their representatives in our own day, and this parable is as applicable to them as it was to those to whom it was originally addressed.

Have not the publicans and the harlots their successors in our day? What are your profane swearers, your drunkards, your slanderers, your deceivers, your Sabbath-breakers, but apt followers of the publicans and harlots. Bold, unblushing sinners, whatever may be the particular line of transgression which they pursue, belong to the class that are represented in this parable by the first son, the son who bluntly refused to obey his father's command.

Now, the parable and its interpretation by Jesus Himself, holds out great encouragement to this class of sinners. It shows most plainly and distinctly that the gates of the kingdom of heaven have been thrown open for such as they are. Salvation has been wrought out. Obstacles have been taken out of the way. The gospel is preached to the greatest sinners, and sinners

of the lowest and worst types have found peace with God and an admission into His kingdom. But, be it distinctly understood, that repentance and faith are absolutely necessary for all such sinners, to secure for them peace with God and an admission into His kingdom. The publicans and the harlots went into the kingdom of God because they repented and believed under the ministry of John. They did not get the blessing because they had been such notorious and bold sinners, but because when they had heard the message which John brought to them from God, they believed and repented. Faith and repentance secured for them an entrance into God's kingdom. Behold, then, the importance of faith and repentance.

And what is faith? Do I need to explain? Perhaps no words that may be used to explain it are simpler and more easily understood than faith itself. We may call it belief, trust, credence, but these words are scarcely more easily understood. Faith is a strong conviction that the gospel is a message from God, that Jesus, His Son, has been in the world and has offered up a sacrifice to satisfy justice, to exalt the broken law and open the door of hope for men. Faith is trust in the mercy of God as it is revealed in Christ and an acceptance of Jesus to be our Saviour as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.

And what is repentance? Do I need to explain that also? Repentance is a conviction of the truth that we are all sinners, miserable sinners, lost sinners,

it is a sense of sin, sorrow for it and a turning from it, with full purpose of heart and endeavor after new obedience. Repentance is a sorrow for sin which leads to a reformation of life. This was the repentance which John preached, for he exhorted those that came to his baptism to do works meet for repentance, and told them that the axe was laid to the roots of the tree, and that every tree which brought not forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire. This was the repentance which John preached and which the publicans and the harlots exercised, and by which they obtained admission into the kingdom of God ; and this is the repentance which bold and daring sinners of to-day must exercise, if they wish to escape the wrath that is to come and to find admission into the kingdom of God.

It is a curious fact that some bold and daring sinners seem to think it a virtue to be openly reckless and profane. How often do we hear some of these ungodly ones boasting that they are not hypocrites, that they make no pretensions to be religious, and that they are just what they appear to be. These hold hypocrites in utter abhorrence, and they themselves boast and swear and swagger, that they may not be supposed to be hypocrites ; and they think that they are fine people and of course they have no fear of going to hell, but they have some kind of a vague expectation of going to heaven. This is an awful delusion from the devil, by which many are eternally



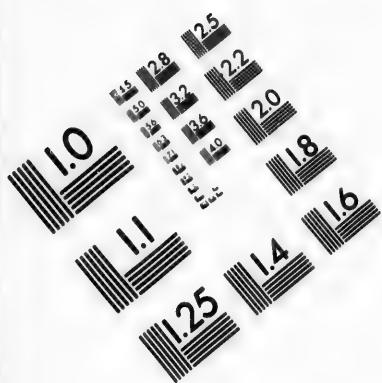
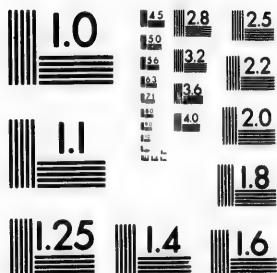
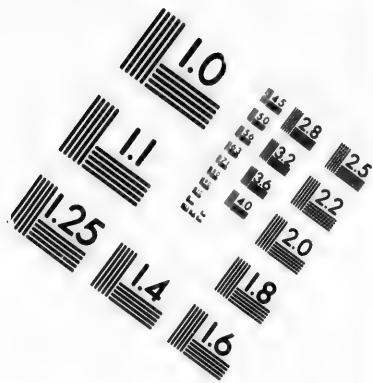
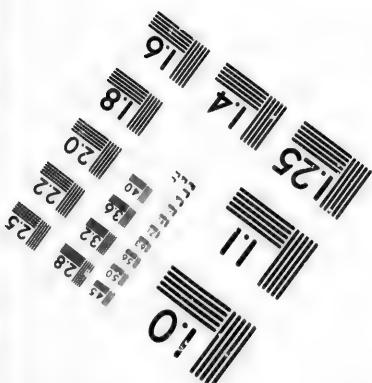
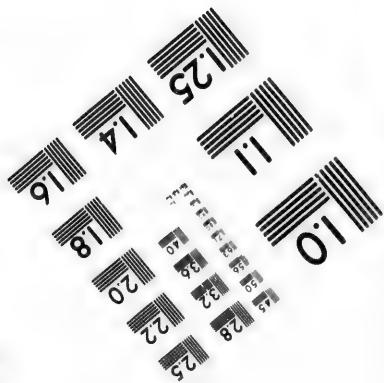
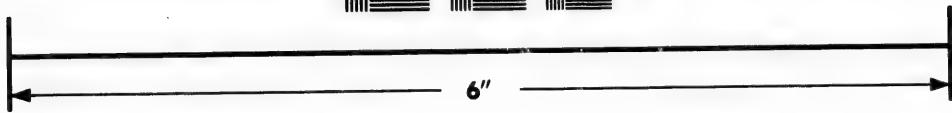


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ruined. And if there is any such reckless sinner here to-day, I would like to argue the matter with him and extricate him, if possible, from his dreadful delusion. Sir, you think it something to be free from hypocrisy. But is it not a fact, that you are equally as destitute of holiness as you are free from hypocrisy; and do you not know that "without holiness no man can see the Lord." You are no hypocrite, forsooth! A hypocrite is a man who appears or professes to be what in reality he is not. Well, be it so, then you are no hypocrite, because you are in reality what you appear and profess to be; that is, you are ungodly in appearance and in reality, you are a child of the devil in appearance and in reality, to all appearance you are on the road to hell, and in truth and in reality you are on the road to hell, and if you continue in unbelief and impenitence, by and bye, you will open your eyes there, and when you find yourself and the hypocrites in hell together, will it then be a source of comfort and a ground of boasting to you, that you were no hypocrite? Sir, this boast of yours will not do! I beseech you, quit it at once; cast off this awful delusion; and repent and believe that you may escape the doom of the ungodly. There is a message in the gospel, even to you, oh bold and daring sinner! It warns you of your danger and it calls you to faith and repentance. Repent therefore; repent and do works meet for repentance. For unless you repent you shall perish.

We have now seen that the publicans and the

harlots have their representatives and successors in our own day, and we proceed at this point to inquire whether the chief priests and elders have also representatives and successors amongst us.

The second son, who said to his father, "I go, sir, and went not," is the picture of the chief priests and elders. He made a profession of obedience but he did not obey, and in that feature of his character he was like the chief priests and elders. They, too, had the appearance and profession of obedience to God's word, but they were in reality disobedient. And have they not representatives and successors amongst us, and in our day? Surely they have. There are amongst us those that have a name to live, but are in reality dead; those who have the name but not the power of godliness. Hypocrite and dead professor, I wish I could unmask thee, and set thee in thine own true colors before thine own eyes. Thou hast a decent exterior, and so had these cavillers, who rejected the message of God which was delivered both by John and by Jesus Himself. Thou sayest that thou art rich and increased with goods, spiritual goods, spiritual blessings; but thou knowest not that thou art poor and blind and naked. Cold, dead professor, let me show thee a picture of thyself. Look at this sepulchre, it belongs to the olden times. It is beautiful without; hewn out of a rock and nicely ornamented, or built up of polished masonry and made all white on the outside, it is fair to behold; but within it is full of dead

men's bones and all corruption. Open its door and disturb what is within ; and at once it becomes noxious and offensive. And such is thine heart in the sight of the Omniscient One, from whom nothing can be hidden.

But is there no hope for the dead professor at all ? Why, there is hope for him on his repentance. The same gospel must be preached to him that is preached to the publican and the harlot. God has not devised an easier gospel for them than he has for him. It is the same gospel for both. Therefore let me say in the words of the apostle, " Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v : 14.) It was not to manifest that there was no way of escape for the dead and carnal Pharisees, that Christ spoke to them as He did, but to show them their need of faith and repentance, their need of true spiritual religion. Therefore, oh, carnal professor, awake ; shake off thy earthliness. The bold and daring sinner who believes and repents enters into the kingdom of God; and why wilt thou not ? Christ counsels thee to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear. (Rev. iii : 18.)

IN CONCLUSION,

a word or two to the true and genuine believers. Be encouraged, brother or sister ; from whatever rank of sinners thou may have come forth, faith and repentance

will bring thee into the kingdom of God. Jesus "receiveth sinners," from whatever class they come to Him. Be not terrified at the remembrance of thy transgressions. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." (I John i:7.) Forget the past as much as possible and press forward towards "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Fight the good fight of faith." God shall "bruise Satan shortly" under thy feet. Art thou encompassed with trials and difficulties? Remember that the shining ones who are arrayed in white robes have come "out of great tribulations and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and remember, too, that our "light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. iv:17.) By these truths, be cheered and encouraged, and press forward for the crown.

N. McK.

Yarmouth, Aug., 1874.

DISCOURSE XII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

Matt. xxii : 1-10. Ps. xlvi : 1 ; Ps. cxi : 1-8 ; Ps. lxxxii : 10.

THE parable which is usually called the parable of the "Great Supper," is in many points like this one ; but they are not the same, neither were they spoken at the same time, nor in the same circumstances, as some suppose.

There are two favorite images under which the prophets were wont to set forth the blessings of grace and salvation, namely, the image of a festival and the image of a marriage. And these two images or figures are blended in this parable.

The colouring and the details of this parable are quite in accordance with the customs and habits of Eastern nations. Among those nations, on the occasion of a marriage, if the circumstances and wealth of the parties permit it, a sumptuous feast is prepared, friends and acquaintances are invited and it is made the occasion of great rejoicing.

You may notice that the form of words in the third verse implies that previous invitations had been given to the expected guests. They were first bidden, and then when all things were ready the servants were

sent to call them ; but they would not come. Then other servants were sent forth, who were instructed to describe the feast, to dwell on the costliness of it and to proclaim that all things were ready.

But those that were bidden made light of it, and in various ways manifested their contempt for the king's invitation. "They went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise ; and the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them." And what now could be expected but the king's wrath, and a visitation of terror and destruction to those murderers. "The king was wroth and sent forth his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city."

However, even then, the king did not give up the hope of securing the presence of guests at the marriage of his son. He therefore sent forth his servants again, bidding them to invite whomsoever they might meet, that the wedding might be furnished with guests ; and this time they were successful. They went to the highways and hedges and gathered in all as many as they found, both good and bad. No objections were raised on the ground of rank or position or appearance ; the man of rags as well as the man of more decent attire, was made welcome ; and the wedding was furnished with guests.

This parable illustrates several points in connection with the kingdom of heaven and the gospel salvation.

I. THE KING REPRESENTS GOD.

God is a King. And He has a Son whom He loves, whom He glorifies, and whom He delights to honor. His Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He has made "heir of all things," and by whom also "He made the worlds."

God is a great King. His dominion is the universe. His kingdom ruleth over all; He reigns from everlasting to everlasting. He is King of heaven and earth; He is Lord of men and of angels.

God is a rich and wealthy King. Whatsoever He wishes to do, He can do on a large scale. He is in possession of all the treasurers and resources that are necessary to enable Him to make an abundant provision for all guests whom He invites, and to accomplish all His kindly and gracious purposes.

And infinite as His riches and wealth, are His benevolence and liberality. He uses His great resources for the benefit of His subjects. His goodness and bounty are abundantly manifest in nature and providence. He opens His hand liberally and "satisfies the wants of every living thing." He sendeth rain and sunshine "on the just and unjust." But the blessings of grace and salvation display His benevolence and liberality more surprisingly than the arrangements of nature and providence do. The gospel is the most wonderful evidence of His benevolence and liberality, that He has ever given in this world.

But while God is a King that is benevolent and kind, He is also a King that is jealous of His honor, that will not give His glory to any other, and whose subjects shall not, with impunity, disregard His word, nor make light of His gracious invitations. Armies are at His command that are ready to destroy all those that despise Him. "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked; the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. (Nahum i : 2,3.)

II. THE MARRIAGE WHICH THE KING MADE FOR HIS SON,

represents the blessings of grace which are revealed, and offered to men in the gospel.

You may notice that the special feature of this marriage which is made prominent is the marriage dinner or festival. There is nothing said about the espousals or the marriage ceremony. They are not brought into prominence at all; the prominence is given to the dinner. The servants were instructed to say from the King, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come to the marriage."

This marriage dinner is an image of the blessings

of the gospel salvation ; for it is a great feast, a sumptuous dinner in which rich and nourishing blessings are spread out for the souls of men. Thus speaks the Prophet Isaiah of it, " And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well-refined." (Isa. xxv : 6.) And Solomon in his Song of Songs, teaches the gracious soul that has realized the love of Jesus, to proclaim his experience in the following language, " He brought me into the banqueting house and His banner over me was love." (Song ii : 4.)

This marriage dinner has been prepared by God Himself out of costly materials, and without any help or assistance from those who are invited to partake of it. " Behold," says the king, " I have prepared my dinner ; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready." God Himself has prepared the gospel dinner. He devised the plan, He made all the arrangements, He provided the materials, and He conducted and guided all the processes of the preparation. And, wonderful to relate, when this great affair is understood, it will be found that the costly materials out of which God has prepared the dinner were the incarnation, the obedience, the sufferings and the death of the very Son for whom He makes the marriage. We are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. (I Peter i :

18, 19.) He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, and He will with Him also freely give us all things. (Rom. viii : 32.)

And if you ask me now to specify particularly the blessings that make up this marriage dinner, I reply : They are forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the curse and condemnation of the law, peace with God, acceptance in His sight, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, the promise of grace to help us in the conflict with Satan, corruption, and the world, and a title to the kingdom that is undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (I Peter i : 4.) Precious blessings, surely ! Oh, how happy are all those that are made partakers of them ! God grant that we may all taste and see that God is good, and that He has made a rich provision for our souls !

III. THE STEPS TAKEN TO SECURE

the presence of guests at the marriage of the king's son, represent the preaching of the gospel to the children of men.

The King sent forth his servants to invite the guests. At first, the guests would not come ; then he sent other servants, but the invited made light of it, and some of them maltreated the servants and slew them. Then the king sent his servants to the highways, and told them to invite everybody whom they found.

And it is thus that God has sent forth His servants to preach the gospel, and to invite men to become partakers of the great salvation which He has wrought out. He sent apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers. The Lord gave the word, great was the company of them who published it. The Lord has sent His servants to Jews and Gentiles ; and even to-day they are abroad, diligently proclaiming the great salvation which the gospel reveals.

The message of the king's servants was, " Behold, I have prepared my dinner ; all things are ready ; come to the marriage." And it is exactly a copy of that message that God's servants bring to the children of men, " All things are ready." God has provided and prepared all ; there is nothing lacking. The way of salvation is open ; nothing is wanting to make the occasion joyous and happy, but that men should accept the invitation, and come in to partake of the great blessings.

" All things are ready." The law is exalted ; justice is satisfied ; the bread of life and the water of life have been prepared ; the provision is complete. God is waiting to be gracious ; He is ready to dispense pardon ; to adopt men into His family, and to give them a right to all the privileges of His sons. Come, therefore, my hearers, and partake of this great spiritual feast. To-day, I give you a free and full invitation. A freer and fuller and more liberal invitation

could not be made than is made in the gospel of the grace of God. It is a cordial invitation; it is an honest and earnest invitation. Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." (John vii : 37.) "Look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth." (Is. xlv : 22.) "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi : 28.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." (Is. lv : 1.) "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii : 17.)

"All things are ready." Bounty, liberality and love are in the message. Come and partake of this great dinner, all ye that have afflictions, difficulties, perplexities and trials. Come to the banqueting house of God, and recline under the banner of His love. "Not to condemn the sons of men, the Son of God appeared." He knows your frailty; He remembers that you are dust; He will not despise your frailty, but will give you grace to help you in every time of need.

God has prepared a dinner for you, and sent out His servants to invite you, that by your contact and communion with Himself, and by your participation in the spiritual feast which He has provided, a spiritual, rich and refined manhood may be developed in you, which will fit you for the society of angels, and which will last forever. Your bodies may grow on material food, and your intellect may be developed by secular learning, and by the forces which ordinary society

bring to bear on you. But there is a spiritual element in your nature which will remain weak and dwarfish unless you partake of the provision which God has made. I beseech you, therefore, my hearers, come to this prepared feast. Oh, refuse not to come! Come one, come all. Be not afraid that you will exhaust the supply, and make a bankrupt of God. He saith, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." (Ps. lxxxii : 10.) "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." (Is. 1 : 5.)

IV. THE CONDUCT OF THE INVITED WHO REFUSED TO COME,

and made light of the invitation, together with the punishment which was inflicted upon them, furnishes a warning to all gospel hearers who make light of the message of peace and salvation which God has sent to them.

There is no doubt that the parable was specially aimed at the Jews. They received the invitation of the gospel first. Besides the fact that they enjoyed special privileges previous to the gospel dispensation, that they had the oracles of God and the ordinances of divine worship, and that the prophets were sent them, Christ instructed His apostles to preach to them first, to begin at Jerusalem. But, alas! they made light of it. As a nation they rejected the gospel; and it was

literally fulfilled in their treatment of the gospel, that one went to his farm and another to his merchandise ; and the remnant took the servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them. Consequently they were punished. God sent forth His armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Here then is warning, loud warning to those who make light of the gospel. The Jews have followers in their unbelief and rebellion, who shall also share in a punishment similar to theirs. The Jews were punished, and so also shall the judgment of God fall on all who reject His grace or despise the message of salvation, wherever the gospel is proclaimed. God has His armies whereby He will punish those that obey not the gospel of His Son. For this end He can use men as He did the Roman soldiers, or He can use the elements of nature, or He can use the devils.

And here let me ask you to observe, that those who went to their farms and their merchandise met the same fate with those that treated the servants spitefully and slew them. In words which I quote. "We learn here the solemn lesson, that though there is much diversity in the degrees of aggravation with which men accompany their rejection of the Saviour, all who do not receive Him perish in the same condemnation. At first, no distinction is made between class and class of unbelievers ; of all and of all alike it is recorded, 'they would not come.' But when the offer became more pressing, and more searching, a difference began to

appear, not as yet the difference between the believing and the unbelieving, but a difference in the manner of refusing, and in the degrees of courage or cowardice that accompanied the act. The greater number treated the message lightly, and preferred their own business to the eternal life which was offered to them in Christ; while a portion not content with spurning away the offer, persecuted to the death the ambassadors who bore it. The fault of those who are first mentioned takes the form of indolent, frivolous neglect, rather than of active opposition. They were occupied with many other things, and therefore could not attend to this one; they were bent on prosecuting their own gains, and therefore set no value on God's favor."

Here, then, let me earnestly warn the diligent farmer and the respectable merchant, who make light of the gospel of the grace of God, and reject Christ Jesus. Your prospect is not different from that of those who despitefully use the messengers and persecute them even unto death. The prospect that lies before you is ruin and destruction. Your farms and your merchandise shall not save you. In their own place they do very well when used in subordination to an interest in the salvation of the gospel. But, on the other hand, if farms and business crush out due attention to the soul's salvation, nothing will result from it but misery and ruin.

V. WHEN THE KING SENT HIS ARMIES
to punish the ungrateful and disloyal persons that had

been invited to the marriage of His Son, He did not give up the effort to secure guests, but He sent out His servants to highways to invite all, as many as they could find. And thus it was that God ordered the gospel to be sent to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected it.

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

Matt. xxv : 1-13. Ps. cxxx : 5; and cxix : 105.

IT is needless to contend about the period to which this parable refers. For whatever accommodation may be made of it to prominent and important events in the history of the church, when the Lord makes a special manifestation of His own presence and power, as, for example, seasons of revival and the great reformation of the sixteenth century, it seems plain to me that this parable will find its ultimate, fullest and proper accomplishment at the Day of Judgment, and the second coming of the Lord Jesus. It is then that the "wise and the foolish virgins," real and nominal Christians, will discover the great difference there is between them, and will be separated from each other finally and forever.

The design of the parable is to shew the necessity of watchfulness on the part of all who profess the Christian religion, and to enforce this watchfulness as a duty. This parable is a continuation of the discourse with which the preceding chapter closes. Watchfulness and readiness for the coming of the Son of Man are the subjects under discussion and illustration to-

wards the close of that chapter, and moreover the exhortation to watchfulness is again enunciated at the close of this parable, verse 13th, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." But while this duty of readiness and watchfulness for the coming of the Son of Man is mainly enforced and illustrated by the parable, it nevertheless constitutes a beautiful picture from which we learn several other solemn truths and lessons. As a certain living divine has beautifully said, "It is charged with many precious lessons which flow freely at the gentlest touch."

I. BY THIS PARABLE ALL ARE REMINDED

of the second coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven to judge the world. Indeed, this is the great and solemn event upon which this animated discourse from the 39th verse of the preceding chapter to the end of the chapter from which the text is taken, bears. At the 37th verse of the preceding chapter the great Preacher says, "But as the days of Noe were so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." At the 42nd verse He says, "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come;" at the 44th verse, "Therefore be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh"; at the 13th verse of the chapter before us, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of

Man cometh," and, finally, at the 31st verse, He begins to give us, without parable, a graphic account of the coming of the Son of Man, and of the solemn transactions and issues of the great day. "Then the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," etc.

Jesus came once already into this world. He came to put down sin by the sacrifice of Himself; He came a meek and gentle one to live a life of sorrow and usefulness, and to die an atoning death. He came to set up a kingdom, to organize and establish a church, to commission ambassadors to preach to sinners forgiveness of sin through His name, and to show by stupendous miracles, by a holy life and by sublime doctrines, that He is the Saviour of the world, that His mission was not to condemn the world but to save it, and that He is able to forgive the sins of all who believe in His name, and to save them for ever from the wrath that is to come. Such was the mission of Jesus to this world when He came upwards of eighteen hundred years ago. And who had finished the work which the Father had given him to do, having suffered for sin and lain for a season in the grave, He rose again, ascended on high, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

But the Son of Man is to come again. He is to

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come in "the glory of His Father with the holy angels," He is to come to "judge the quick and the dead," He is to come to sit upon the throne of His glory ; He is to come without sin unto salvation, without any more sacrifice for sin, and for the final redemption and salvation of His people. "Behold ! He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i : 7.) "Because He (God) hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii : 31.)

The Son of Man will come and at an hour when men do not look for Him. This is the grand truth, the central truth of this parable and of the context that precedes and that follows. It is a solemn truth. Have you ever thought of it seriously my human followers ?

He may tarry for a season, He has tarried for these eighteen hundred years, and He may tarry for a considerable time yet ; but this does not diminish the solemnity and importance of the thought of His appearing. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise," as some men count slackness ; "but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Pet. iii : 9.) He is giving men time and space for repentance. He prolongs the season of grace ; He multiplies our op-

portunities for making our calling and election sure ; but He will not always thus deal with us He will come, and the cry will be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet Him." And then there shall be no escape, then there can be no shirking. Men may refuse to consider their eternal interests now ; but then they must face their Judge and submit to His decision. Young men may now sow their wild oats, curse and swear, drink, carouse and annoy their neighbors ; men of the world may now pursue their business to the neglect of their soul's interests ; men who have family cares may now persuade themselves that they have no time for religion ; young women may now give all their hearts to dress and fashions ; but there is a day coming for which these things are no preparation at all ; there is a day coming when these can give no comfort at all to beating hearts and anxious souls. Therefore, let me plead with you earnestly, let me exhort you affectionately and seriously, to stir yourselves up to make due preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom.

II. BUT WHAT IS THAT WHICH CONSTITUTES THE

preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom ? This is the second thing to which I call your attention, as we may learn it from this parable.

Here is a group of ten virgins, who, according to Eastern customs, took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom ; but the sequel of the story tells

us that only five of the ten were admitted to the marriage, then the door was shut and the others were finally and forever excluded. Now, what made the difference? What was it that led to such an issue? I pray you who make a profession of religion, who in any sense profess to be waiting and looking for the Bridegroom, listen, for there is here a most solemn warning, a most solemn admonition for you. And may I not say, that this admonition is for every one here. You are not all indeed church members, you are not in that capacity going forth to meet the Bridegroom, but nevertheless you profess to some extent to be looking for Him. Your presence here, your observance to this extent of the ordinances of religion, proclaims that you are going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

Now, here is a picture of you, a picture of all who have the gospel and to any extent profess to receive it. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto these ten virgins, that is, the professing Church of God on earth is likened unto these virgins. But these virgins were in the end separated. Some of them never entered the house in which the marriage festivities were celebrated; only five of them reached that happy end, the others were entirely excluded. Only ~~some~~ had the proper preparation, were in the right ~~state~~ of readiness. Now, what was it that made this difference? What was it that led to this issue?

They were all virgins, they all took their lamps,

they all went out to meet the bridegroom : while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, and when the midnight cry was made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him ; then they all arose from their slumbers, and from their sleep, bestirred themselves and trimmed their lamps." In all these things they were alike ; no human eye could make a distinction or discover a difference. It probably never occurred to them that such a large number would in the end be so sadly disappointed. Up to the last moment there was no discovery made of the great and important distinction that existed between the two parties into which the group were finally divided. And what was it that constituted the readiness of the one party, and that the other party lacked ? It consisted in this, the one party had oil in their vessels along with their lamps, the others had no oil at all ; they went out with lamps ill supplied and with empty vessels, and when the time for the torch procession arrived, these could not join it. They had foolishly neglected to secure a supply of oil while it was day and the merchants were selling, but the others had wisely secured a sufficient supply of oil and took it with them in their vessels with their lamps.

And now what is this oil, this article that was so essential for the virgins in order to their being in readiness for the coming of the Bridegroom ? What is that in Christianity, of which this oil is significant and illustrative ? that a Christian must have in order

to give life and power and value to his profession? It is nothing else than the Holy Spirit and His grace. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi: 63.) "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." (Rom. viii: 9.) Look at this watch. It may have all its wheels, axles and chains but if it wants the mainspring it is useless. Look at yonder vessel with all its masts and yards and cordage and sails; it may be fully manned with active, skilful, experienced sailors, its rudder and helm with all their gearing may be in excellent condition; its sails may be set, and everything about it may be in trim according to the principles of modern improvements; but if the wind does not blow, if the breath of heaven does not fill the sails, no progress can be made toward the harbour. Look at these virgins. They all take their lamps and go out to meet the bridegroom, they all wait for him while he tarries, they all arise at the call that announces his coming, they all trim their lamps; but those who have acted so foolishly as to neglect to take a supply of oil in their vessels, cannot join the procession, and while they attempt to rectify past mistakes, the bridegroom and his procession, accompanied by the wise virgins that had provided for themselves the necessary oil, enter the marriage hall and the door is shut.

Here, then, we learn on the one hand, what that is which is absolutely necessary to constitute readiness and preparation for the coming of the Son of Man, and

on the other hand, that men may go very far in a profession of religion, while they are altogether destitute of its grace and power. Men may make a profession, take their lamps, go out with those who are waiting for the Son of God from heaven, join their societies, mingle in their assemblies, and thus go on during their life time deceiving themselves, and do not, till it be too late to rectify past folly, discover that they are sadly destitute of the spirit and the grace of God. I pray you consider this subject, meditate deeply and seriously upon it. What matter then is here for self examination ! O, my hearers, be not satisfied with a lamp without oil, with a name to live while yet you are dead ; be not satisfied with the letter of Christianity without its spirit. Let the oil be obtained while it is day ; for " now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

III. BUT, IN THE THIRD PLACE, TO GIVE GREATER weight still to the main exhortation which the parable supports, consider more definitely and minutely the admission of the wise virgins to the marriage, and in contrast with it, the exclusion of the foolish.

The admission of the wise virgins. " And while they (the foolish virgins) went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut." Here we have an illustration of the admission of true believers into the abodes of bliss with the blessed Saviour. It is a figure of admission into heaven, and respecting it we may make the following observations :

First. The righteous enter heaven with the approval of Jesus the bridegroom. He will not upbraid them, He will not reject them. All that are found ready at the hour of His coming will enter with Him into the joy of their Lord. They will join the company of His attendants and enter with Him to the marriage.

Secondly. The righteous will have happiness in the kingdom that is prepared for them. Their enjoyments will be festive. A marriage feast is a figure to illustrate their enjoyment. Now, a marriage feast is an occasion of great joy and rejoicing amongst men. As far as possible, sorrows, and cares, and fears, and annoyances are excluded on nuptial occasions. And these are faint figures of the joy and happiness that are at God's right hand. Then, there shall be joy without mixture, happiness without misery, and pleasure without pain. The door will be shut, no intruder can find admittance, no element of misery can enter there. Peace, happiness and safety dwell forever there. And

Thirdly. The enjoyments of the righteous in the kingdom of glory will be social enjoyments. Men at marriage feasts, more than on any other occasion, seek and strive to be social and to promote social enjoyment. Joyous hearts beat, beaming countenances smile, and sparkling eyes look pleasure on such occasions. But, oh! these are small trifling things in comparison with the signs and symptoms of social enjoyment that will be seen in heaven, where angels and the spirits of just men made perfect shall forever rejoice

in the presence of the exalted bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now, let us look at the exclusion of the foolish virgins from the marriage hall. "The door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." This is illustrative of the disappointment that awaits all who are satisfied with a mere outward profession. The door was shut, they prayed for the opening of the door, but the Lord refused them admittance. Just as it was when the ark was shut and the rain came—who were in were in, and who were out were out. No prayer shall prevail, the season of grace is ended. No more opportunity. Nothing but the refusal of the Lord—I know you not. Not as I know my people. Not so as that I shall admit you.

And now, this whole picture is to enforce the duty of watchfulness, to stir us up to embrace our opportunity. Why shew us this end, but that we might be stirred up to take steps for avoiding it. The market is open; the gospel is preached, the salvation of the gospel is offered. God promises His Spirit to any that ask Him. Now, improve the moments. Be up and doing, and be up and praying.

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DISCOURSE XIV.

THE SEED, THE BLADE, THE EAR.

Mark iv: 26-29. Ps. lxv : 1-4; Ps. lxv : 9; Par. liv : 1.

THE different parables illustrate different aspects of the kingdom of God, and it is the work of the expositor to explain the peculiar aspect of it, in which each parable presents it. There is no parable that sets it forth in all its aspects; and perhaps no parable could be framed to do so, that would be intelligible to the human mind. And even if one complicated parable could be framed that would illustrate the kingdom of God in all its aspects, it would still be of advantage for us to have it set before us under various figures, similitudes and parables.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself explained some of His own parables, and we have only to accept the explanations which He has given us and meditate upon them for our edification. For instance, of this class are the parable of the sower and that of the tares of the field. But, on the other hand, of some of His parables Christ has left no explanation at all. Of this class is the parable that is now before us. Guided, however, by the parables which He has explained and by the general tenor of scripture, we shall be able, I

have no doubt, by the blessing of the Spirit of God, to understand this class of parables also.

And in attempting to explain the parable that is before us, we must remember the following observation, viz.: The same natural object or fact does not signify the same thing in all parables. Indeed this is an observation which applies to all the figurative portions of the scriptures as well as those of all other writings. A particular part may or may not signify the same thing in different figurative representations. In the explanation which Jesus has given of the parable of the tares of the field, He says, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." On account of this we may be ready at first sight to suppose that in the parable that is before us, the man that casts the seed into the ground also signifies the Son of Man. But on careful examination we find that this is not the case. Again, in the parable of the tares of the field, the harvest signifies the end of the world, and for this reason we may be ready to suppose that in the parable that is before us, also, the harvest signifies the end of the world. But I shall show you by and bye that it does not.

The seed in this parable signifies the word of the kingdom, and the ground signifies the hearts of men, and particularly the hearts of those that are savingly influenced by the word. Now, if we say that the man that cast seed into the ground signifies Jesus Christ, then we meet with a difficulty when we come

to explain the fact that this man sleeps and rises night and day, and that while the seed springs up and grows he knows not how. This part of the representation does not give a fair illustration of the Son of Man, for He does not sleep and rise night and day, and by His divine omniscience He is acquainted with all the processes of spiritual germination and growth in the hearts of men. The man in this parable does not therefore signify the Son of Man ; we must abandon the opinion that he does. Whom, therefore, does the man in this parable represent, if he does not represent Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of Man ?

The man in the parable must represent the human agents by whom the word of the kingdom is preached, he is a figure of the ministers of the gospel. Now, let us see how this will suit throughout the whole parable. "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Here is a beautiful and appropriate representation of the gospel minister. He is exactly like the husbandman or agriculturist, who casts seed into the ground, and who, after he has done so, has nothing more to do directly to insure germination and growth. He may watch the field, keep up its fences, guard it against the inroads of cattle, and keep drains and ditches open by which superabundance of water may be carried off ; but he cannot control the properties of the ground, nor the heat of the sun, nor the

showers and breezes of heaven. He sleeps and rises night and day, and goeth about other avocations till the harvest, and the seed springs and grows up, he knows not how.

It is exactly so with the ministers of religion and the preachers of the gospel. They cast the seed of the word into the ground of men's hearts. They preach to men ; they point out their sins ; they direct them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. And then they sleep and rise night and day, and preach again and in different places ; and they attend to other matters as their duties and necessities may require ; but they can exert no direct control over the seed of the kingdom after it has been deposited in men's memories and hearts by preaching. They may strive to guard their people against error, against the seductions of Satan, and against the habits and practices of the ungodly. They may, and they ought, to labor to inform the understandings and to guide the outward conduct of the people among whom their lot is cast ; but they cannot make the seed grow, nor can they understand how it grows when it does. They cannot touch hearts nor enter into them ; they cannot bring down special showers of grace from heaven ; all they can do after they have cast in the seed is to pray. And the seed springs and grows up, they know not how.

“ For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

In the first place this statement accounts for the ignorance of the man respecting the growth of the seed which he has cast into the ground. The earth brings forth fruit of herself, according to the properties which the Creator has given to her and the laws of vegetation which He has established for her. The Creator communicated to the earth properties, and He established laws in the relation which it holds to the sun and the atmosphere, and of the secret operation of these properties and relative laws the agriculturist is ignorant. He knows, however, that they do operate, and consequently he casts his seed into the ground at the proper season, but he has nothing more to do directly, afterwards, but to wait patiently for the harvest.

After an analogous fashion the Creator has conferred properties and impressed laws upon the human mind. These properties and laws operate secretly. No eye but God's can see their secret operation, no hand but His can touch them. The minister of the word cannot effectually control them, and he remains ignorant of the motions and operations in the hearts of those to whom he preaches. And as these things are beyond his reach and beyond his knowledge, so he is not responsible for the growth of the seed at all. It is his duty to cast in the seed, he is responsible for that, but after he has done that he has no more directly to do, to cause springing up and development. He may pray, he ought to pray ; and he may have considerable anxiety. He may even feel disappointed and sad, if

signs of springing up and growth do not appear ; but at the same time he ought to remember, that while Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is God that giveth the increase.

In the second place, the statement which is now under consideration illustrates the responsibility of the hearer of the word. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." God has given to the earth properties that fit and qualify it for bringing forth fruit. That is its nature, and, if I may say so without being misunderstood, its duty, while God continues and controls the ordinances of the heavens which constitute the favorable circumstances, is to bring forth fruit. At the return of spring the seed being cast in, the earth is expected to bring forth, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear ; and if it does not, even it, although it has no intelligence nor will, is nigh unto cursing. So Paul says in Heb. vi: 7, 8 : "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessings from God : But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing ; whose end is to be burned."

In like manner the Creator has given powers and faculties, properties and laws to the human mind, which fit it to receive truth and to bring forth fruit unto God. Men have consciences, reason, intelligence, judgment, memory, and will, for the exercise and use

of which they are responsible to God. Although by the fall, corruption has entered in and the human mind has become darkened and depraved, yet, so much of the original power and glory of the mental faculties remain, as make men inexcusable, if they reject the word of salvation and continue in their rebellion against God. " For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head : so that they are without excuse." (Rom. i : 20.) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii : 19.)

And are there here some, into whose hearts the seed has been cast, but in whom it has not yet sprung up ? I warn you of the danger of the position which you occupy. You have heard the gospel ; your sins have been brought to your remembrance ; Jesus has been set before you ; the mercy of God in Christ has been proclaimed in your hearing ; and yet you are impenitent, unregenerate, and unsaved. And why is it so ? Oh ! think not that you will be able to shift the blame from yourselves to somebody else. God will vindicate both Himself and His faithful servants. I beseech you, therefore, take warning, take counsel and advice. Bemoan your barrenness and unfruitfulness ; and beseech God to give you His Holy Spirit, that He may give the seed of the kingdom growth and fruitfulness in your hearts and lives.

In the third place, we have here an illustration of the stages of progress and development through which the word of God passes in the hearts and lives of true believers. There are "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Of course, before the blade appears upon the surface there is a secret work of sprouting and germination going on beneath the soil. And so it is also with the seed of the kingdom. There is a secret work in the heart before any manifestations of it are in the life and conduct. Secret thoughts and secret feelings are experienced by the soul. It may be that for a season the mind oscillates between faith and doubt, between joy and sorrow, and between hope and fear. This part of the process is often painful, because the conscience gets alarming views of sin and of the wrath which sin deserves. And there may be an awakening and a conviction which do not result in regeneration and conversion at all. Our parable, however, illustrates cases in which conviction and anxiety are followed by true conversion.

In such cases, in due time the blade makes its appearance, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; that is, a true work of grace cannot be always concealed. It will come out. The blade of grace comes out, weak and timid, it may be, at first, but nevertheless with a decided distaste for sin and sinful pleasures, and an humble yet persevering effort to follow Jesus and to obey His commandments. And,

as time goes by, it becomes plainer and more evident to intelligent observers that the convert has an aversion to sinful pleasures, and that he or she, as the case may be, has a decided liking for the society of the pious and the God-fearing of their associates and neighbours.

And then, by and bye, the ear appears, the work of grace advances and makes progress. The understanding becomes more enlightened, the conscience becomes more tender, and the affections are more firmly and unwaveringly set on divine and eternal things. Sermons are heard; the Bible is read, and enlarged views of God and spiritual things are attained. Some inconsistencies and extravagances are committed, it may be, but afterwards they are understood and repented of and forgiveness of them is prayed for and obtained.

At length, thoughts are entertained by the convert on the question of making a public profession and connecting himself with the visible church. He or she, as the case may be, has given himself or herself to the Lord, and now feels it to be a duty to be in public and full communion with His church. And so, when the convert has attained this ripe state of faith and profession, the laborer in the gospel ministry puts in the sickle and admits into full membership the penitent and believing one. "But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Some have explained the harvest here as signify-

ing the end of the world, and others as signifying the close of the Christian's life on earth when he is brought home to the upper kingdom where he shall have an "house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. v : 1). But at least one has propounded the view that the harvest signifies the time when converts, having given themselves to the Lord, give themselves also to the visible church through the office-bearers who preach to them the gospel and endeavour to guide their feet in the way of life. Because Jesus has explained the harvest, in the parable of the tares, as signifying the end of the world ; men, without closely and carefully examining the subject, have been ready to suppose that the harvest in this parable also signifies the end of the world. But this view of it will not harmonize with the rest of the parable. You may take notice that the same person who cast the seed into the ground, at last puts in the sickle because the harvest is come. But, as I have already showed you, the man who cast in the seed signifies the human agents who preach the gospel ; so the harvest cannot mean the end of the world, for it is not they that shall put in the sickle at that great and final harvest. The angels shall be the reapers then, as we learn from other passages which graphically describe the solemn realities of that great day.

In the words of Rev. Wm. Arnot, "'The harvest is come.' It is not the end of the world ; it is not even the close of a Christian life in the world. There

is a ripening and a fruit-bearing whilst life in the body lasts ; there is also a reaping and an enjoying of harvest by those who sow the seed and their successors. The announcement, ' One soweth and another reapeth,' clearly implies that the same one who sows, may also to some extent reap. There is part of both ; a sower gathers some of the fruit of his labor in his own life time, and some of it is gathered by others after he has departed."

Such is the parable and its explanation. Now let us apply it to ourselves.

The seed has been cast into the ground here. For upwards of four years that has been my work here. And I have done that work. I do not say that it has been done in the ablest and happiest manner, but still it has been done with sufficient plainness and ability to throw the responsibility on the hearers. You have been told that the wages of sin is death, misery, a curse, the wrath of God. You have been warned of the danger to which you are exposed on account of your sins. Christ and the merits of His death have been set before you. The love of God, the way of pardon, justification, sanctification, and the Christian life in many of its aspects have been explained to you. You have been counselled, urged, encouraged to close with Christ and to lay hold on the hope set before you in the gospel. Thus the seed has been cast into the ground.

Now what has been the result ? Have we seen

the blade and the ear and the full corn of a public profession and engagement to be the Lord's? Well, in some instances, these have appeared. We have not been altogether without a harvest. But how small has it been in comparison with what it might have been! Is it not true that in some instances whole families, claiming adherence to the congregation, have stood aloof from the sealing ordinances of the church? In other instances, only the parents have made a profession of faith in Christ, while the children give no signs of piety, no signs of a saving faith in Jesus. How many are amongst us on whom neither blade nor ear nor full corn appear!

And is this as it ought to be? Surely not. While we thank God for those that are lively Christians, we ask how is it with you that have neither blade nor ear nor full corn of a Christian life? and what prospects for eternity have you? If the power of God's truth over you has not been sufficient to make you Christians on earth, how can it be supposed to be sufficient to prepare you for death, judgment and eternity? If you have not faith and piety enough to make you profess Christ before men, think you that you have faith and piety enough to enable you to stand with acceptance before His Father who is in heaven? You deceive yourselves sadly if you imagine that you have.

Let me plead with you now. Why do you neglect the great salvation? Perhaps you do not mean to neglect it always. Then how long will you neglect it?

How long will you resist the truth and keep God and His church waiting to receive you? You expect, it may be, to give yourselves to Christ some time. When will you do it? When will you bring forth the blade, the ear and the full corn in the ear?

How would it fare with you? or what would you say if God were to deal with you in temporal things in the same way in which you deal with spiritual things? What would you say if He were to keep the ground from year to year, from yielding a harvest, as you have kept your souls from year to year from yielding a spiritual harvest? Several years ago the seed was cast into the ground of your hearts, and yet you have not brought forth fruit unto God. What if God had kept the natural harvest back from you for so many years? Why, you would have been long ago a famished and ruined people. I beseech you awake to sense and to righteousness. Receive at once the "engrafted word which is able to save your souls." And if there is any secret religious movement in any of you—any anxiety, any faith in Christ, any sorrow for sin, any aspirations towards God—I beseech you do not conceal these things. Come out on the Lord's side. First, give yourselves to the Lord, and then give yourselves to His church in public profession. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x: 10.)

Belmont, July, 1876.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XV.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Luke x : 25-37, or rather 30-37. Ps. xv : 1 ; Ps. xxxvii : 37 ;
Ps. xxxvii : 23-27.

I BRING this passage in among the parables, simply because it is usually reckoned among the parables. But it is not called here a parable, neither has it any of the characteristics of a parable except that it is a tale. It is not, however, a tale to be figuratively or symbolically interpreted, but a tale which sets before us, on the one hand, instances of hateful selfishness and of neglect towards a fellow creature in distress, and on the other hand, a case of hearty and exemplary benevolence.

The tale forms part of a conversation which took place between Jesus and a lawyer ; and to enable us to obtain a correct and instructive view of this tale of the good Samaritan, we must begin at the commencement of the conversation.

A certain lawyer stood up and asked Him, saying, " Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? " It is said that this question was put to tempt Him, apparently not with a malicious intent to entrap Him, but simply to put Him to a test or trial. But although this

question was not perhaps put with a malicious intention yet it was not prompted by any seriousness or by any great anxiety about his own salvation, on the part of the lawyer.

The wisdom of Christ's reply is remarkable ; He referred the lawyer back to the law of which he himself was by profession an expounder, and He made Him supply the necessary materials for an answer. Jesus accepted the answer which the lawyer returned, and told him to keep the law, and that he should live.

We do not need either to defend this view of the case which Christ gave as if it were a republication of the old form of the covenant of grace, or to explain it away as if it were not. It is true, always, that obedience merits life, and disobedience deserves death. It is true to-day ; it is the foundation of God's moral government. And doubtless, although Adam fell and his posterity are involved in original sin, still if it were possible for any human being to keep the law he should have life by it.

But the man was not satisfied to leave the matter here. Doubtless the conviction flashed on him that his prospects were not very bright on such a view of the case ; but at the same time, anxious to justify himself, he asked, "And who is my neighbor ?" And it was this question that gave rise to the story of the good Samaritan. The Jews held narrow views on the question of their relation to persons not of their nation. And very likely the man thought he could

make out a good case for himself if he could get Jesus to acknowledge as correct the prevailing opinion that he had no neighbors beyond the limits of his own nationality. But by the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus put the matter in a clear and convincing light.

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed leaving him half dead."

The distance between Jerusalem and Jericho is about eighteen miles, and the route usually travelled from one place to the other, lies through a rocky district, which of old was much infested with robbers ; and it is so even to this day under the weak government of the Turk. Dr. Thompson, in "The Land and the Book," gives the following account of his first journey to Jericho : "Early in the morning of April 16th, 1833, we left the Convent of Archangel, and passed down the *via dolorosa* to the palace where the guard was already in motion, and from thence, with the white flag of the pilgrim in front, and the green of the prophet in the rear, we set forward. It was a merry hour apparently to everybody. The whole population of the city, of either sex, and of every age, in their best, lined the zigzag path along which the pilgrim host was to pass. With noise and pomp, such as Arabs only can affect, we passed out at St. Stephen's gate, wound our way down into the narrow vale of Jehoshaphat, over the south point of Olivet, by the miserable remains of the

city of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and then prepared ourselves to descend—for you must remember that we must go down to Jericho ! And sure enough, down, down we go, over slippery rocks for more than a mile, when the path became less precipitous. Still, however, the road follows the dry channel of a brook for several miles farther, as if descending into the very bowels of the earth. How admirably calculated for 'robbers.'

" After leaving the brook, which turns aside too far to the south, we ascended and descended naked hills for several miles, the prospect generally becoming more and more gloomy. Not a house, not even a tree is to be seen, and the only remains are those of a large Khan, said to have been the inn to which the good Samaritan brought the wounded Jew. Not far from here, in a narrow defile, an English traveller was attacked, shot and robbed, in 1820. As you approach the plain, the mountains wear a more doleful appearance, the ravines become more frightful, and the narrow passes less and less passable. At length the weary pilgrim reaches the plain by a long, steep declivity, and doubtless expects to step immediately into Jericho. But, alas ! no city appears ; and after a full hour's ride, he pitches his tent (if he have one), in a dry sultry plain of sand, sparsely sprinkled over with burnt-up grass. If he have no tent, a shrivelled thorn bush is better than nothing ; and if he cannot get that let him do as we did—sit down under the burning sun and bear it as well as he can."

This may give you some idea of the dangerous way which this man had to travel. It was a rocky, rough, lonely way, a suitable haunt for thieves and robbers. Thieves and robbers ! alas ! how degraded and dangerous to their fellow men have some of mankind become. In every age, since the violence which brought the flood on the world in the days of Noah, there have been thieves and robbers more or less numerous. And there are such in our day, men of similar wicked and inhuman dispositions, who would have no scruples about living by plunder and rapine, were they not afraid of the power of better organized governments than those of ancient times. We cannot be too thankful to God for the protection which a well-organized government throws over us. The powers that be are ordained of God, and the more His word prevails and His kingdom extends, the more efficient governments become for the protection of the lives and properties of industrious and law-abiding men.

Well, this man fell into the hands of violent men, who robbed him, and stripped him, and left him half dead. "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side." This priest was a Jew, and a religious functionary, and surely it was to be expected that a sight of misery would excite his compassion and generosity. But, no. Selfishness made him turn his eye away from a fellow creature in distress. No doubt some feelings of pity and commiseration would be ex-

perienced by him, but his selfishness would bring up excuses which quieted his conscience and overbore his rising feelings. To help this man would detain him and give him trouble and cause expenses ; it would interfere too much with his own plans and projects.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him and passed by on the other side." Here was another countryman, from whom better things might be expected, but he, too, allowed selfishness to override whatever tender feelings might have been at first sight awakened, and passed on and left the wounded man to his fate.

"But a certain Samaritan came where he was and had compassion on him, and bound up his wounds," doing the work of a surgeon as well as he could. And then he put him on his own ass, and brought him to an inn, and stayed with him till next day, and paid for his trouble, and promised to pay further expenses too, if necessary. And it is pleasant to know that there are still in the wilderness of human nature some bright spots, some pleasant oases on which the eye can rest with some satisfaction and delight. If there are thieves and robbers, if there are heartless and selfish men, priests or Levites, there are also here and there to be met with, tender-hearted, compassionate and generous men like the good Samaritan.

And now comes the testing question for the lawyer. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves ?" And

he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." The lawyer saw that there was no alternative for him, but to answer the question as he did. His good sense would not let him answer it in any other way, although his language seems to indicate that it was with some reluctance that he gave credit to the Samaritan, while by implication, he was at the same time condemning the priest and the Levite.

Accepting the lawyer's reply, Jesus said unto him, "Go, and do thou likewise." And here is the practical lesson which the tale was intended to inculcate. It was intended to teach us to exercise kindness and generosity towards our fellow creatures in want or in distress. How unlike the mind that was in Christ Himself, are the heartlessness, the indifference and the selfishness that are often exhibited by men who would like to be esteemed faithful and sincere followers of the blessed Redeemer, who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be made rich." (II Cor. viii : 9.) There is nothing in which Christianity shows its own native excellencies more readily and conspicuously than in the feelings of compassion, kindness, and mercy towards the erring and the unfortunate, which it awakens in those that are its subjects. The ethics of selfishness are not the ethics of Christianity, but it inculcates the ethics of disinterestedness, self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of others. Hence it says, "Let no man

seek his own, but every man another's wealth." (I Cor. x : 24.) "Love your enemies." (Matt. v : 44.) "Love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. xix : 19.) "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. vii : 12.) "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil. ii : 3, 4.)

Such is the lesson which this parable or tale was intended to inculcate and enforce. I am aware that it has been used and explained as a parable to represent man's helpless and ruined condition, and 'Christ's merciful interposition on his behalf to save him; but I am convinced that the tale was not told for such a purpose at all. There is doubtless some resemblance between certain facts of this narrative and the ruin and recovery of man; but the resemblance is not so close as to make these facts representations of this ruin and recovery. And I am afraid the force of the narrative is weakened, when it is explained according to a principle different from that in which Christ Himself used it.

There seems to be a great tendency in the minds of commentators and readers of the scriptures to spiritualize, that is, to explain facts and narratives as if they were figurative and symbolical of spiritual things, instead of being direct sources or channels of moral instruction. It is to be feared that many who like to

hear about Christ's love and sacrifice, have no relish for discourses and exhortations on the plain practical duties of Christianity. Many hear the words of Christ but do not the things which He saith, and "profess that they know God, but in works they deny him." (Titus i: 16.)

Of course, we cannot do without Christ, that is, we cannot be saved without Him. But we ought ever to remember, that Christ came to teach us to love our neighbor, as well as to call upon us to believe in Himself. Indeed, faith in Christ is not only the method of justification, but also the principle by which a Christian is enabled to love his neighbor. And unless our faith works by love, and leads us to keep God's commandments, there is reason to fear that it is not a good, genuine, saving faith, but a spurious and dead faith.

Therefore, brethren, I beseech you cultivate the spirit that was in the Samaritan, and in any circumstances calling for a course of action like his, do not fail to follow him. "Go, and do thou likewise." Follow the example of the Samaritan, and not only his, but the example of a greater than he ; follow the example of Christ Himself. He has set us an example of self-denial and self-sacrifice, an example of love and good works, that we may follow His steps. To be saved, sanctification is as necessary as justification, obedience is as necessary as a profession of faith.

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE RICH FOOL.

Luke xii : 16-21. Ps. c : 1 ; Ps. lxii : 7-10 ; Ps. xxxix : 4-8.

THE circumstance which gave rise to this parable is related in the preceding verses. Evidently there was a family quarrel. An inheritance was left between two brothers; but one of them by reason of some advantage in his favor, had got possession of it, and justly or unjustly, he deprived the other brother of what the latter considered to be his just share. We do not know which of them was in the right, but very likely he who spoke to our Lord was. But if he was right about the property, how wrong was the state of his heart! He could stand there and listen to those solemn words of our Lord, and yet be thinking all the while of nothing but the estate, and the dispute with his brother regarding it. And when an opportunity occurred, by reason of an interruption in the discourse, or of some other circumstance, he broke in upon the sacredness of our Lord's active labors, with a request for His interference in the dispute between him and his brother.

And is it not to be feared, that multitudes who come to our meetings are in like manner absorbed in

reflections on their worldly affairs, even during the solemn services of the sanctuary? Yes, doubtless, some who are nominally connected with churches and who come to hear sermons on the Sabbath day, cannot leave the world behind them, even during the solemn hours of worship; and when there is a break in the discourse or when the discourse is over, they are back again in their thoughts and converse to the things of earth. A paltry, earthly inheritance bulks more largely in the estimation of some, and engrosses their thoughts more frequently, than the inheritance of the saints. I beseech you, my hearers, if you wish to get any spiritual blessings from God—if you wish to have His presence, to receive His Spirit, to get comfort and guidance from the truth which you hear,—banish from your thoughts and hearts your earthly affairs on the Lord's day; and when you are professedly engaged in the worship of God, and in hearing the message of the gospel which He has sent to you, let not mammon be the real object of the homage of your hearts.

At first sight, we may be surprised at our Lord's reply to him who spoke to Him about the inheritance, but when we consider the case carefully, I think that our surprise will be removed. "Man," said Jesus, "who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Who ever was in the wrong, the dispute was not a question to be brought to Jesus. It was purely a civil and secular matter, for the settling of which, other judges properly invested with authority existed in the nation.

Jesus steadily and persistently refused to interfere in such matters. He would have nothing to do with a question about property, for He had come to this world on a far higher mission. He had come to settle a dispute about the true riches, and to teach men how to become heirs of the inheritance that is "incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." And such a man as this, who could content himself with thoughts of property, under the weighty and powerful preaching to which he had been listening, stood in far greater need of being instructed concerning spiritual things, than of having his civil affairs adjusted, however right his cause might be.

Jesus was there for a greater purpose than to settle the rights of property. He was there to save souls, and to teach those that were heirs of hell, how they might become heirs of heaven. And knowing that the covetous and grasping propensities of men are antagonistic to their soul's best interests, He turned to the multitude and gave them a solemn warning against covetousness, illustrating His subject by the parable which I have read in your hearing. This narrative is a parable because it was used to convey spiritual instruction; but it is very probable that it was a historical truth, and was literally true of some particular man. And doubtless, it is much to be feared that, in the main features of it, it is an exact account of the manner of life and the end of multitudes of men.

Let us meditate upon the several parts of this parable in the order in which they occur.

I. "AND HE SPAKE A PARABLE UNTO THEM, SAYING,

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." Well, this might be true of a godly man. We could not attach any blame to the man for the circumstances here stated; nor is there any crime alleged against him on account of them.

He was a "rich man." And although it is said elsewhere, that it is hard for "a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," yet we know as a matter of history, that some who had wealth were humble and devoted Christians. Paul says, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." But he does not say, not any. The possession of wealth is not favorable to the development of piety, but it need not necessarily exclude it. It was not in the fact of being rich, that this man's fault lay. For the ground was his own, and there is no injustice laid to his charge as to the way in which he came into possession of it. And being rich as a land-owner, he must certainly have employed servants. But there is no charge preferred against him on the score of his treatment of them; he is not accused of cheating or oppressing them; he may have been a kind and considerate master.

And surely no fault could be found with him for the fact that his ground brought forth plentifully. He was probably a skilful farmer who knew something about the methods to be adopted to make the ground

fertile. And the ordinances of the heavens and the earth were propitious to him. The sun shone and the rains fell and the dews distilled, to develop the capacities of the soil. Instead of blaming him for this, most people would be ready to argue that he was a favorite of heaven, because he was prosperous. And certainly, it is a favor and a blessing from God to have success and prosperity in our temporal interests and callings, if we receive them in the right spirit.

II. "AND HE THOUGHT WITHIN HIMSELF,

saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

Nor do these words bring us yet to the bad spots in this man's character. No one could find fault with him for being thoughtful and considerate. It was right for him to provide for taking care of the abundance which he was about to reap from his well tilled lands. And what more proper, than that he should commune with himself about this matter? So he engaged in a soliloquy or dialogue with himself. He put to himself the question, "What shall I do?" How shall I meet this emergency? He brought his reason and judgment into play, and that is what any wise man will do, in connection with the conduct of his affairs.

And certainly, it were well for many that we know, throughout our community, if they were to exercise their reason and judgment. It is a pity that there is

not more thinking and consideration amongst men. To think and consider are right exercises, if used according to right principles. If reason and judgment were better cultivated there would not be, we have reason to believe, so many broken fortunes, cheerless and desolate homes, and suffering families. If some that think, like this man, are at last lost, others are ruined by not thinking at all. And so we have not yet reached the black spot in this man's character. So far, we have found him doing things in which a Christian may engage.

III. "AND HE SAID, THIS WILL I DO :

I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow my fruits and my goods." Having considered the case, he determines on a certain course of action. His barns are too small, he has not store-room enough ; and certainly it was right that his abundant produce should be gathered and preserved from injury, whatever use he might make of it afterwards. What could be wiser, therefore, and more provident, than to take steps to secure that his fruits and goods might be properly housed? Doubtless that was a proper course for him to pursue in the circumstances. Any good man might do the same. So far, therefore, we have not reached the error in this man's conduct which vitiated all before God, and merited for him the title of "fool." As far as we have examined his con-

duct, we cannot say but that any man might do as he did and still be a good Christian. Surely a man may be rich, have fertile lands that yield an abundant crop, build barns to receive his produce, till he puts it to the proper use afterwards, and not be a fool as this man was. Where, then, was the error? where lay the mistake and folly of this man? The next words reveal it to us.

IV. "AND I WILL SAY TO MY SOUL,

Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." We have now reached the point in the narrative at which the man's mistake and folly flash suddenly upon us. These words make a full revelation of the complexion of the man's spirit,—a spirit of selfishness, earthliness and ungodliness. At this point, if there were any piety, benevolence, correct estimate of human life, and a true regard for the future in the man, they would have come out. If the religious element had been in any true sense in the man, it would have manifested itself at this point; and no such religious element manifesting itself, was a sure sign that it did not exist in his heart. Consider attentively these significant words.

These words betray an utter forgetfulness and disregard of God. There is here no recognition of His hand in providence as the great Ruler that sustains the ordinances of the heavens, preserves and promotes the fertility of the earth, and gives to man every good

and perfect gift which he enjoys. Nor is there any recognition of Him as the God in whose hand is the thread of human life, and to whom we are to render an account of the use we make of His bounty. This man assumes the airs of an absolute proprietor and ignores his dependence on God.

Again, these words betray great selfishness. All this man's care is for his own soul ; he has no remembrance of the claims of benevolence, and considers not the case of the poor and needy that might chance to come across his path ; he takes not the support of God's ordinances and the maintenance of religion into his account, when deliberating upon the method of expending his abundant substance. His great aim, his only aim, is to extract enjoyment for his own soul from his ample fortune of earthly things. Benevolence has been entirely dried up in his bosom, if ever any such thing existed there. To indulge his own unhallowed soul is his only care, so he says, ' Soul, thou hast much ; it is thine own ; thou hast no one to thank for it, nor any one to consult in regard to its consumption ; eat, drink and be merry.'

Further, these words betray great ignorance of the nature and wants of the soul. This man has no aim above eating and drinking, and being made merry thereby. These are certainly good in their own place and within moderate limits, but they are not the higher wants of the soul. This man takes no cognizance of the soul's spiritual wants, yearnings and aspirations.

All he thinks about is eating and drinking and merriment ; enjoyments which brutes can have in common with him. Bodies are sustained by eating and drinking; not so souls. To propose to make a soul happy by means of an earthly portion alone is preposterous. The thing cannot be done ; it is impossible ; and he is a fool that makes the effort. The soul has moral faculties, spiritual relations and aspirations, and to ignore these in the effort to secure its happiness is a lamentable mistake.

And lastly, these words betray a sad forgetfulness and disregard of the uncertainty of a man's life on earth. This man, like many others, promises to himself a long life ; he expects to be merry in the enjoyment of his earthly portion for many years. So he says to his soul, " Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Many years ! This was presumption, and unfounded confidence. The truth was that he might be brought to the end of his life at any moment. All the history of mankind, and the most ordinary observation on human life teach this truth. Whosoever is ignorant of it, is most inexcusable in his ignorance. Men may know, ought to know, that death is in pursuit of them ; may be even at their heels when they least expect it. Nor should this most solemn truth of the uncertainty of human life be ever forgotten, when we make our calculations for earthly gains and earthly happiness. " Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain ; whereas ye know not what shall

be on the morrow. For what is your life ? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." (Jas. iv : 13, 14, 15.)

V. LET US NOW HEAR

how God disposed of this case, and we shall find that His judgment therein harmonizes with the estimate which we have formed of the man's character. " But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall shall be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? " These words might have been rendered, " But God said, concerning him, Fool, this night they demand of thee thy soul ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? " It does not necessarily mean that God spoke audible words which the man heard ; it means God's judgment regarding him, and God's dealing with him. And the phrase, ' they demand or require of thee thy soul,' seems to have reference to the agents and precursors of death, such as diseases, dangers and other mortiferous powers, physical or supernatural. It is as if it had been said, These agencies are coming in the course of nature and providence to seek the man's soul this night, and go he must whether he will or not.

Alas ! into what a collapse does God, at one stroke, bring the man's bright plans and promising speculations. This man was running his train at full speed

toward the town of earthly happiness, the town of ease and merriment ; but God comes, lays His hand on the lever, reverses the engine, and drives him willing or unwilling altogether in an opposite direction. Observe how God opposes and reverses each section of his fine calculations. He thought himself wise, prudent and skilful in managing his business, but God calls him " Fool." Again, he promised to himself " many years " of ease and merriment, but God says, this night will end them all. He said, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up, eat drink and be merry ; but God says, They demand of thee thy soul, and then whose shall the substance be which thou hast provided ? **Whose** shall it be ; the man's soul gone, his substance advertises for an owner.

VI. AND NOW LET US LOOK

at the solemn warning truth into which Jesus gathers up the whole parable : " So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

To enable us to receive upon our hearts, by the grace of God, the full force of this truth, which should sound like thunder in our ears, we need to understand the meaning of being rich toward God. To be rich towards God. That evidently means to be at peace with God through the blood of atonement, and to be rich in the faith which unites the soul to Jesus, and secures justification on the ground

of His righteousness. It means to be rich in love, rich in meekness, in temperance, in joy in the Holy Ghost, and in the works of obedience, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. And here is the general truth into which the parable is gathered up: He that has wealth, but that has neither Christian faith nor Christian love, nor hope, nor joy, nor works of obedience to the gospel of Christ, is like this rich fool. The favorable judgment which he forms of himself, God contradicts; the plans which he makes to promote his own happiness, God does not approve; his hopes and expectations rest on false foundations, and if he repent not and do not strive to be rich toward God, his soul which he purposes to make fat, shall be required of him and his hopes shall perish.

My hearers, I beseech you, learn useful lessons from this instructive parable.

First, whatever your circumstances in this world are, whether you are poor or wealthy, make sure of the true riches. Be rich toward God. If you wish the tree of happiness to take root and grow, plant it in the right soil. Let its roots of faith and love fasten in Christ Jesus, let its top be watered by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Have faith in Christ; have joy in the Holy Ghost. Rest not your weight on any earthly portion, but "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Again, I beseech you, imagine not that you are

absolute owners of what you possess. No; you are only stewards; you are accountable to God. If God gives you riches, it is that you may use them to His glory. Like any other talent which He may give you, you are accountable to Him for the use which you make of them. Think not to spend all on yourselves, or you may find out your mistake when it is too late. Open your ears and your hearts to the calls of benevolence, do not repudiate your indebtedness to maintain the ordinances of God and extend His kingdom.

Further, when you are making plans and schemes for your future course of action, and adopting methods for the consumption of what God gives to you, consult Himself. Your dialogues with your own soul will be sure to end in disaster, unless you take God Himself into the colloquy. If you do not recognise His right to be a party in the management of your affairs willingly and cordially, be sure that He will some day assert His right and reverse your plans. And, pray, what will be the use of your fine plans, fair opinions, and favorable judgments regarding yourselves and your prospects, if, when God comes, He reverses all. Let, therefore, your dialogues with your own souls be accompanied by dialogues with God.

And lastly, let your plans be made in the light of the truth that life is uncertain, and that you do not know "what a day may bring forth." Be "the children of light, and the children of the day," and then when Christ comes, whether it be at death or at the

judgment you will not be taken at unawares. Count not positively on the uncertain future, when you are making plans either for usefulness or for enjoyment on this side of the grave. Promise not to yourselves, "many years." For future years are not yours to dispose of, but God's. Therefore, commit your years as well as other things, by faith and prayer into His hands. And when death's summons has been served on you, let not your departure be the requiring or taking of your souls from you, but let it be the committing of your spirits into the hands of God.

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DISCOURSE XVII.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

Luke xiii : 6-9. " He spake also this parable : A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none : cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year, also, till I shall dig about it and dung it : and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

" **H**E spake also this parable :" the word "also" connects this parable with the preceding context, and indicates that the parable was meant to illustrate the subject of the preceding teaching namely, the necessity of repentance and good fruits in order to escape perdition.

He was told of certain Galileans who had been put to death by Pilate, when they were engaged in the religious work of offering sacrifices. Pilate had mingled their blood with their sacrifices, and it was the opinion, it seems, of those who made the rehearsal in the hearing of our Lord, that those Galileans had been greater sinners than others : this was the conclusion which they inferred from the fact that such a terrible judgment had overtaken them.

But this was an erroneous opinion, and Jesus

proceeded to correct it. "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He does not deny that the Galileans on whom that terrible death had been inflicted were sinners, but he contradicts and overturns the opinion that their suffering such a terrible death proves them to have been greater sinners than other Galileans.

Another calamitous event of a similar nature, and coming under the same principle He finds in the case of those on whom the tower in Siloam fell. Their violent death was more clearly and evidently a providential visitation, but notwithstanding, it was not to be regarded as proof "that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem."

These sayings of Jesus seem to me to warrant us in adopting the following as the correct view on this subject: In the government of God over this world, sufferings and death are the consequences of sin. The general fact of sin, is the cause of the general fact of sufferings and death. Had there been no sin, there would have been no suffering and no death. But while this is true, it is not true that the heavier calamities of certain individuals are the consequences of their greater sin and wickedness. In other words, it is not a rule in the government of God that individuals are in this life visited with calamities and sufferings in proportion

to the degrees of their sins and iniquities. In some instances indeed, great blasphemy and wickedness are followed by heavy and manifest judgments. It was so in the case of Herod, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. xii) that he was eaten of worms till he died because he gave not God the glory, when the people in their ignorant flattery applauded him, and said when he made his oration, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." But while cases of such a nature may occur occasionally, it is not an invariable rule in the government of God, to visit sinners in this life according to the extent of their wickedness. Therefore when we behold a case of great suffering, we must not jump to the conclusion that the subject of the suffering is a greater sinner than ourselves or others, but on the contrary we ought to take warning that, unless we repent of our own sins, and do works meet for repentance, we shall assuredly sooner or later perish.

It was to illustrate this truth, and to enforce it still more strongly, that this parable of the barren fig tree was spoken. "He spake also this parable," spake it in addition to what immediately precedes it, and in the same line of doctrine.

The meaning of the parable is pretty obvious. The proprietor of the vineyard and of the fig tree signifies God; the vineyard signifies the visible church, the ordinances of grace, and God's providential care over those on whom He hath conferred religious privileges. A vineyard was a highly cultivated spot of

ground, usually situated on a hill enjoying exposure towards the sun, and well fenced round about to protect it from the inroads of destructive animals. It therefore makes a beautiful and suitable representation of the privileges which those enjoy who are in possession of the word and the ordinances of God, such as the Jews in the days of old, and we ourselves in the year of grace, 1874.

The fig tree signifies men who enjoy religious privileges. You may observe that the fig tree in the parable was planted in the vineyard. It was not a growth from a stray seedling that by chance had been dropped in the vineyard, but it was a planted tree. It had been set by the hand of man in that cultivated and protected ground. Hence we have it in a beautiful figure of individual men that have a place and name within the visible church. The Jews were thus planted in the vineyard, and Isaiah speaks of them under that figure, in an allegory which in many of its features resembles this parable : " The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." (Is. v : 7.) And have we not ourselves been thus planted in the visible church and under the shadow of Christ's ordinances ? We have been born in a Christian land ; we have our abode where the gospel is preached and where ordinances are dispensed ; we have the word of God ; we have been, the most of us, if not all of us, baptized in the name " of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy

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Ghost"; and we have had our training and our education, more or less under Christian influences. And now, I ask, how do we stand before God? What is the fruit that we bear? Is it such as He will approve of and accept?

The parable goes on to say, "And he came and sought fruit thereon and found none: Then said He unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" The owner of the fig tree looked for fruit; for that the tree was planted; and failing in that it only cumbered the ground. It occupied space which might be used to better purpose; and therefore the owner pronounced its doom and commanded its destruction. Nor could he be charged with rashness and impatience; he had given it time and opportunity to bear fruit. Three years he had looked for fruit; three years after the tree had come to maturity he had waited patiently; three years, on each of which he might reasonably expect fruit, he had come looking for it; but he found none. Why then should he spare the tree any longer?

God likewise looks for fruit from us, His rational creatures, in whom, we must all confess, He hath conferred many precious and distinguishing privileges. He reasonably expects fruit, and time after time He has come looking for it. And now I ask, I put it to your consciences, has He found it? "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, meekness, temperance." I ask, are you confident that the all-seeing eye of God has found such fruit as this growing and ripening in your soul? Has He found you repenting and "doing works meet for repentance"? Has He found you believing in Jesus? renouncing all your own righteousness, and relying alone for salvation on the righteousness of Christ? Has He found you "followers of God as dear children and walking in love as Christ also hath loved us"? Has He found you "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts"? Hath He found you avoiding all questionable amusements? Hath He found you "making your calling and election sure"? Hath He found you standing by the banner of the cross and fighting "the good fight of faith," whilst, it may be, the arrows of the world's scorn and ridicule were flying thick and fast around you? Hath He found you bearing testimony for Christ in the various relations of life in which you are placed? as parents, and as children, and as neighbors? in your various avocations, and in the transaction of all your business? In particular, has He found you that are parents, praying and laboring with anxiety for the everlasting salvation of your children? Do you seek for them "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"? And by your own pious, and Christian example, as well as by your precept, do you strive, in reliance on divine grace for success, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"?

Now, I have confidence and trust that there are

some here who are bringing forth fruit "which is by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." I have trust that there are here some, who, while there are still many imperfections about them, are nevertheless resting and building on the right foundation; who have passed from death unto life by the grace and power of the Holy Ghost; who have "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel"; who have "presented their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as their reasonable service," and are "not conformed to this world," but are "transformed by the renewing of their mind," and are "proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"; who have taken Jesus to be their Saviour and are determined to follow Him through good report and through ill report; and who by devout meditations, and believing prayers at the throne of grace, hold fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. To such our adorable Redeemer says, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

But while I have confidence that some are here who bear fruit, on the other hand I have fear, yea, I do not doubt, that there are here some like the unfruitful fig tree, on whom, when the Lord makes search,

He findeth no fruit, and concerning whom therefore, He may have given the command, cut them down; why do they cumber the ground? I cannot but fear, and be dismayed at the thought, that there are some such here: would to God, I had grounds for thinking and believing otherwise! Oh! that God would hasten the day when none shall have occasion to say to his brother, "Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." But that happy period has not yet come; and we must therefore, bear, as well as we can, the thought that friends, kind friends, respectable friends, after the world's fashion, and neighbors and acquaintances, are in the eye of God fruitless fig trees, cumberers of the ground, and therefore deserving of His highest censure, and are exposed to His terrifying and desolating judgments. Think not, I beseech you, that I am your enemy when I denounce your impenitence and unbelief, and warn you of impending judgment. The physician is not the patient's enemy when he applies the burning caustic to the painful sore, or when he uses the sharp scalpel on the quivering flesh, or the grating saw on the fractured bone, or when he administers the nauseous draught whose immediate effects only increase the sick man's misery. Nor is a father his child's enemy when, to root out some growing vice, or to check and destroy some gathering habit of an immoral nature, he deliberately uses the rod and administers the necessary chastisement. Now I would

be the kind but faithful physician who does not shrink from increasing the pain at first, if necessary, in order to effect a cure ultimately ; and I would be the tender-hearted but wise father, who does not hesitate to use the rod, when there is need for it, to break in wayward children to the ways of truth and honesty and industry.

Ye fruitless souls that only cumber God's ground, let me endeavor to point you out, and to set your own state and character before your eyes. O, that God would enable me to describe your character and to analyze your sentiments in such a way as to carry conviction to your own souls ! Could I awake you to a sense of your state, then I could entertain hope of your conversion and your everlasting salvation.

And who are the fruitless ones that cumber the ground ? Well, there are some of you who know very well that if the Bible is really true,—if it is true that man is by nature a depraved and sinful being, that Jesus has come to die for men, that all that do not believe in Him and love and serve Him must be lost—then it is also true, that you are not yet saved ; you have never repented, you do not believe in Jesus, nor love, nor serve Him, you are fruitless souls cumbering the ground and on the road to perdition. Your secret sentiment is, that somehow or other it will turn out that these things are not exactly as the Bible represents them to be, and as ministers usually depict them. Scoffer, you are a fruitless soul ; profane swearer, you are another ; prayerless one, you are another ; hypocrite and dead professor, you are another. You

that are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; you that give yourselves, up body and soul, and time, and strength to the service of mammon—you are all among the fruitless ones that cumber the ground, and on whom the sentence may have already gone forth, “Cut them down, why do they cumber the ground ?”

And if the command has been issued, “Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ?” Why has it not been speedily executed ? The parable goes on to say, that the dresser of the vineyard answered and said, “Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” And who is this dresser of the vineyard, who intercedes on behalf of the fruitless fig tree ? Whom does he signify in the spiritual economy ? He must certainly signify the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the blessed Mediator and Intercessor. He is the dresser of the spiritual vineyard, to whom the Father hath committed all the interests of His cause on earth. He is the Head of His Church and the King of nations. All power, in heaven and on earth hath been given to Him ; and being now exalted to God’s right hand, He makes intercession for us.

And now, carefully consider the words of intercession which are ascribed to Him according to the imagery of this parable. There are three things in them ; first, he prays for a continuance of the day of grace to the fruitless soul ; second, he proposes to take greater pains with it than he has been taking ; and

third, he intimates that he will acquiesce in its destruction if it do not bear fruit after another fair trial. Let us look at these things for a little in order.

First, Jesus, the Mediator and dresser of the spiritual vineyard, prays for a longer continuance of the day of grace to fruitless souls. We know from other places in scripture that He intercedes, on behalf of His believing and faithful followers who bear fruit, that they may be delivered from dangers, snares, temptations, and made more and more fruitful in the vineyard of God. But here He is represented as praying for the fruitless ones that already cumber the ground, that they may be spared a little longer, that further time and opportunity to repent may be afforded them. And who knows but some are here to-day, still spared at the footstool of God, who should not have been here, who should long ago have been cut down and consigned to perdition, were it not for the intercession of the Great Mediator the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, Jesus, the Mediator and the dresser of the spiritual vineyard, proposes to take greater pains with the fruitless ones. This is represented in the parable by the proposal which the dresser makes to dig about the fruitless fig tree and to dung it. These are two important and necessary operations in all husbandry, as well as in vineyard keeping. The digging loosens the soil round about the roots of trees, and the manuring supplies nourishment. And in the spiritual vineyard, Jesus Christ conducts similar operations to bring

souls into a fruitful condition. He digs about them with the spade of providence. Sharp and cutting dispensations turn up and loosen the soil about men's souls, exposing the roots to softening and salubrious heavenly influences. Sometimes He only works above the ground and among the branches, trimming and topping them. But when that fails He goes down to the roots and tries His appliances there. Sickness, losses, bereavements, are digging and piercing operations which Christ tries on fruitless souls, when milder and less painful means do not produce the desired effect.

And now I ask, has not Jesus been thus dealing with some of you? He has not only given you the Bible and opportunities to hear sermons, but He has also shaken your nests by some trying dispensation of His providence. He has touched the roots of your souls; He has stirred up your consciences, excited your fears, shaken your carnal confidence, and convinced you that earth is not your home, and that you need something better than anything which earth can afford, to give you comfort in death and a good hope for eternity. Oh, how sad if you resist all influences, and refuse to yield to any of His appliances. If you bear fruit, well. It shall be a happy thing indeed. Jesus will be satisfied; the Father shall be pleased; angels shall rejoice, and your souls shall be saved if you bear fruit. But if not, then what can you expect but a cutting down?

Third, The very Mediator, who now by His intercession secures for you a continuance of the day of

grace, will acquiesce in your destruction when it comes. The dresser of the vineyard said, " If it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Fruit, or cutting down: these are the alternatives. Fruit, in repentance, faith, obedience or destruction. Nothing short of fruit will satisfy the great husbandman: nothing else will satisfy the dresser of the vineyard.

O, ye that have hitherto been unfruitful, therefore, take warning, take warning in time, lest by delay your souls perish forever. It may be that you are now enjoying your last probation. The further continuance of the day of grace secured for you by the great Mediator, may be fast drawing to a close. You may be fast nearing the end of your season of grace. The moments are slipping away, but you have still time and opportunity to repent and bring forth fruit. I beseech you, improve the moments as they pass. Neglect this business no longer. Awake out of your sleep. Consider your state; you are lost sinners. O! fly to Jesus. He can save; He can save " them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Accept Him in faith; quench not His spirit. " Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

" Almighty God, Thy word is cast
Like seed into the ground,
Now let the dew of heaven descend
And righteous fruits abound.

" Let not the foe of Christ and man
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in every heart
To bring forth fruits of love."

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

Luke xiv : 16-24. Ps. cxxii : 1 ; Ps. cxii : 4-8 ; Ps. cxxxii : 13.

ON one occasion Jesus was at dinner in a chief Pharisee's house, where according to His usual practice He embraced opportunities for teaching those that were about Him. And a certain man exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." From this saying Jesus took occasion to deliver the parable of the Great Supper, to which I wish to call your attention to-day.

"A certain man made a great supper and bade many ; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready." This narrative fairly implies that there had been first a timely invitation sent to the guests, perhaps some days before the supper took place, to afford them opportunity to make the necessary preparations, and that a second message was sent to them when the supper was first ready and their presence was immediately required. It would seem, also, that the invited parties had signified their acceptance of the invitation when it was just sent to them, although they allowed other business to interfere with them, and to make them refuse the invitation when the supper was just

ready. If this was so, it was an aggravation of the slight which they put upon the feast and upon him that was at the expense of preparing it.

When all things were ready he sent his servant to tell those that had been invited that their presence was required. But they all began to make excuse : One had bought a piece of ground, and he was very anxious to see it ; another had bought five yoke of oxen and he wanted to prove them ; and a third party had married a wife, and he thought that this was sufficient reason why he should decline the invitation.

It is said that "they all with one consent began to make excuse." This does not necessarily mean that they had met and agreed among themselves to decline the invitation which had been given to them. The words mean, and they need not be made to mean more, than that they were all of one mind and of the same disposition in regard to this matter. They had resolved severally, but not in actual concert, to decline the invitation, and to attend to their own affairs instead of going to the great supper which had been prepared for them.

As was natural, this conduct on the part of those that had been invited, provoked the master of the great supper, and he resolved to take steps to secure other guests ; wherefore he commanded his servant to go "into the streets and lanes of the city, and to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind." This was done, and "yet there was room"; and then

the master of the house commanded his servant to go out "into the highways and hedges and compel men to come in, that his house might be filled," declaring at the same time his resolution that the formerly invited who had slighted his invitation would never taste of his supper.

Such is the narrative. We shall now look at its spiritual meaning.

I. THE MAN THAT MADE

the great supper represents God, for God has made for mankind a great supper in the gospel.

It does not appear that the man who made the great supper was under any obligation to make such a thing, by his relation to the parties whom he invited. It was on his part an act of kindness and generosity. And in like manner God was not under any obligation to provide the gospel salvation for fallen men, it was on his part an act of free will and pure kindness and generosity. Adam, by his fall into sin and rebellion against God, brought himself and his posterity under God's displeasure. By their descent from Adam and by their own actual transgressions men have forfeited all claim to God's favor and blessing. And it was an act of pity and love, and mercy, on the part of God to make any other provision for man's salvation when he had forfeited the favor of God by his breach of the covenant of works. Hence, when the scriptures give an account

of the cause why God sent His Son into the world, they do not say that He was bound by justice to send Him, but that he "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii: 16.) God has made a great supper for mankind of His own good will and pleasure. When He might have left them to perish in their sins, as He has left the angels that lost their first estate, He was moved by pity and compassion to make for them a great supper.

No wonder, therefore, that He should be angry when men decline His invitation and despise the provision which He has made for their souls. The master of the house was angry at those that made excuse. And so God is angry at those who obey not the gospel.

II. THE GREAT SUPPER

represents the great spiritual and abundant provision which God has made for the salvation of sinners.

(a) This spiritual provision which God has made for sinners of mankind, is called in the scriptures different times a supper, or feast, or banquet. It is a supper or feast which consists of different valuable articles of food for men's souls. "It is a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." (Is. xxv : 6.) Behold what a supper have we here—how

precious ! how valuable ! Who would not wish to be a partaker of this supper ? We have here forgiveness of sin—deliverance from the curse and condemnation of the law—peace with God—peace of conscience—salvation from the power and love of sin as well as from its guilt—a promise of grace to aid us in the conflict with the devil the world and the flesh—fellowship with God the indwelling of His Holy Spirit—victory over death, and finally an entrance administered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord.

(b) Such is the supper, and no wonder that it should be called a great supper. It is great in its own nature, the blessings are great, for they have been provided for men, and the cost is great at which God has made the provision. The supper was made at the cost of the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God. His “blood is drink indeed, and His flesh is meat indeed.” We are “not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Peter i : 18, 19.)

III. THE SERVANT WHO WAS SENT

by the maker of the feast to invite his guests, signifies the ministers of religion, indeed all who, in any sphere or capacity, labour to bring sinners to the Saviour. With regard to these I have only a few remarks to make.

And first. It is an honorable office which they fill—an honorable position which they occupy. They are the servants of Almighty God whom He employs on errands of mercy, and in doing a great and blessed work, surely they should honor their Lord and Master and magnify their office. They should be very thankful for the honor done to them, in that they have been found faithful and put into the ministry.

Secondly, In doing their work they should remember that they have nothing to do but execute the commission which the Master has given to them. The servant could say, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded"; and so ministers and parents and teachers who undertake to invite sinners to Christ, should just do as they are commanded. They have their commission in the scriptures, and their great aim and object ought to be to execute that commission, not adding to it nor taking from it, but simply explaining, illustrating and enforcing it according to the rule and the warrant which they have in the word. They are to invite the poor and miserable; to compel them by moral means.

IV. THOSE THAT WERE INVITED TO THE

great supper represent men of all ranks and classes to whom the gospel has been sent, and who have been invited to become partakers of the salvation which God has provided.

The main point in the parable is the illustration which it gives of the danger of neglecting or refusing the invitation of the gospel. In this matter the parable had a primary application to the Jews, who refused to accept Christ and the message which He brought to them from God. But we may safely pass that over and inquire, whether it has any application to ourselves. And doubtless it has in this matter an application to us, for in every age, and in our day, as well as at any other time, there are gospel hearers who treat its invitation in a way similar to the excuses that are here described.

There are here three excuses, founded upon possessions, business transactions, and family pleasures. The first man had bought a piece of ground and he was anxious to see it, the second had bought oxen and he wanted to prove them, and the third had married a wife and he thought it a sufficient excuse or reason to keep him away.

First. Observe these were not direct refusals, but each of the parties thought that he had a sufficient ground for declining the invitation. Each was engaged with his own affairs, matters of his own and of immediate concern to him engaged his attention, and he declined the invitation.

And it is so, that many gospel hearers to this day, deal with God's gracious invitation. Many are ruined, not because they are notoriously wicked, but because they are so engaged with their own temporal affairs

that they think they have no time nor leisure to attend to the salvation of their souls.

Secondly, Observe, again, that the grounds on which the excuses were based were matters that were in themselves, and within certain limits, lawful. Multitudes urge similar excuses, from age to age, and are ruined by them. These three persons do not represent vicious and degraded sinners who will not accept the gospel invitation because they are so attached to lusts and vices, but they represent the industrious farmer, the shrewd man of business, and the kind husband, and all who prefer the things of time and sense to the great salvation which Christ has procured. Their guilt lies in that they prefer the things of time and sense to the great supper which God has provided, they prefer possessions and business, and family pleasures and cares to the forgiveness of sin and peace with God and a title to heaven.

My hearers, are there any among you that decline the invitation of the gospel, thinking that you have a sufficient ground on which to base an excuse for doing so? Let me tell you that you are sadly mistaken. There is no sufficient reason for neglecting your soul's salvation, there can be no reason. I beseech you, that have been making excuse, do so no longer. Come now, all things are ready, the supper is provided. Christ has died, God is waiting to be gracious. If you make excuse, God may say that you shall never taste of His supper. He may pass you by and go to others for He is determined to have guests.

God is determined to have guests, and so He commands His servants to go out and invite all, as many as they can find. And no matter how many may have come in already, "yet there is room." There is room in God's mercy, in Christ's merits, in the Spirit's grace, in the church on earth and in the kingdom of glory above. There is room.

Taking His commission in my hand, let me invite sinners now. The supper is prepared—God sends for you, come. Come, as you are, He will find you. Come in, come in, come in !

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DISCOURSE XIX.

THE UNJUST JUDGE.

Luke xviii : 1-8. Ps. xxxiii : 6-9 ; Ps. xlii : 7-11 ; Ps. exli : 1-4.

THE purpose for which this parable was spoken is made plain. The inspired writer distinctly announces the object for which Jesus used it, namely to show "that men ought always to pray and not to faint." And the parable is both an illustration and the basis of an argument.

It will be well here, at the outset, to note particularly the special object for which the parable was framed, to guard it from misapprehension. It was not meant to teach us everything about prayer. For instance, it does not teach us in whose name our prayers must be offered up ; neither does it instruct concerning the things which we may ask, and ought to ask in prayer, nor concerning the shape which our prayers must take. All these things and such things as these, are repeatedly taught and made abundantly plain in other portions of the scriptures.

The main point, and I may say the only point concerning prayer, which this parable touches, is, perseverance therein. This is the point which Christ wished to inculcate and for the illustration and enforce-

ment of which, He used this parable. He spake this 'parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.' This does not mean that we are required to be engaged in prayer, in the manifest attitude and exercise of it always, that is, every moment of our lives. It means that we must persevere in it, never give it up entirely, but have stated and occasional seasons for prayer, and never desist until we obtain the blessing, in short, till we make our departure from this life and find admission into the kingdom that is "undefiled and that fadeth never away." It may be seen that the unfortunate widow was not always before the judge, but that she came again and again till she obtained her request. It was her "continual coming" that influenced the judge to grant her petition. In like manner it is our continual coming that is meant by praying always, and not fainting. This shall be made plainer as we proceed with the exposition.

This parable brings two characters or persons before us, a judge and a widow. Look at each of them.

This judge lived in a certain city, and acted probably as a deputy in the capacity of a judge. He was a bad man. He "neither feared God nor regarded man"; no doubt, like a good many of his class in countries where the machinery of government is in a more advanced state of organization than it was among eastern nations and in ancient times. In the discharge of the duties of his office, this judge was

actuated solely by selfish motives. He consulted his own ease and aggrandizement, and was not scrupulous about the means and methods by which he endeavored to secure these.

It will be noticed, therefore, that this judge in his general character, was far from resembling God. In his general character, and his ordinary procedure as judge, he stood out in marked contrast to God, who is always good and who always does right. And it was indeed, on account of the contrast between him and God, in his general character, that this particular instance in his judicial procedure became a parable in the hands of Jesus Christ. But this circumstance instead of weakening, only strengthens the conclusion drawn, and the application made by the Great Teacher. This we shall see more clearly by and by. So far as the narrative describes him, this man resembled God in nothing, but the one thing, namely, that in this instance he listened to the prayer of the widow and granted her petition, being overcome by her importunity and perseverance.

Look now at the widow.

It is said that the state of widowhood in the east, is one of great desolation, and of consequent exposure to all manner of oppression. And indeed, generally, we may attach ideas of weakness, desolation, and defencelessness to widowhood.

This particular widow was suffering oppression. She had become the victim of the cruelty of some in

human adversary. It is not indeed stated in so many words that her cause was just, and that her adversary who might be called her opponent—that being a correct, rendering of the Greek term—was guilty of oppressing her. But we readily gather from the tone of the narrative that this was the case, that she was the victim of oppression. She was a weak, helpless, defenceless woman, suffering wrong from the hand of an adversary from whom she could not deliver herself.

And here we have in the widow's adversary a third character, that is indirectly brought to view. This adversary no doubt represents the devil. He is the adversary of men. He is an adversary that "walketh about seeking whom he may devour." (I Peter v : 8.) He puts temptations in the way of men ; he raises annoyances about them, and he is continually busy with his schemes and plans to frustrate the gospel of the Son of God, and to ruin the souls of men. And although it is true that men are fallen and corrupt and have much personal sin to answer for, it is also true that much of the evil that surrounds them and of the misery which they endure, is the direct result of the wiles and stratagems and oppressing power of the devil, so that they need the wisdom of a higher intelligence than their own, and the strength of a more powerful arm than their own to deliver them.

But what did the widow do in view of the oppression which she was suffering ? She went to the judge and begged him to take her part and defend her.

She said, "Avenge me of mine adversary." The judge gave no heed for a while. He was careless about her; for he was a man of no principle; he "neither feared God nor regarded man." But she persevered; she kept coming and presenting her petition, on every suitable occasion, and, as it would seem, whenever he appeared in public. She came so often that it became quite evident that the annoyance which she gave him would continue for an indefinite period. This made him think; this made him uneasy. And "he said within himself, Though I fear not God nor regard man; yet because this woman troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

This man avowed his ungodliness and inhumanity; he was not ashamed to say in his soliloquy, "I fear not God nor regard man." Neither his fear of God nor his zeal for justice would move him to maintain the cause of a poor oppressed widow. He did not care for her, but lest her continual coming should weary him, he resolved to avenge her of her adversary. It was her importunity and perseverance that gained for her the victory. The only thing on which her success rested was her importunity, her perseverance, her determination not to give up till she obtained her request. Everything else about the character of the judge seems to have been against her, save his sensitiveness to the annoyance of persevering and determined importunity. But this one thing made the op-

pressed widow successful in her attempts to find redress for her wrongs.

And now, let us see how Jesus reasons out of this case His lesson concerning the necessity and power of importunity and perseverance in our prayers to God. "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." Here is an argument from the weaker to the stronger; an argument *a fortiori*, as the logicians call it; an argument in which reason assures us, that if a certain proposition is true, much more evident and clear is the truth of another proposition of an analogous kind, but based, manifestly, upon stronger grounds. Here was an unjust judge, a man that lacked piety towards God and generosity towards men; a widow who could not move him by conviction that she had any claim upon him, or that it was his duty to trouble himself with her affairs, besought him to redress her wrongs. No plea could move him; he resisted every appeal. But she persevered, she was importunate, she continued clamouring out her petition, and at last the judge yielded to the importunity and perseverance which annoyed him, and he maintained her cause. And shall not God hear prayer and avenge His own elect? Assuredly He will; much more certainly He will. For He is good, merciful, kind; and He has appointed prayer, He directs men to make their requests known to Him;

and He promises to hear and answer the importunate, persevering prayer of faith. Shall not God hear and avenge His own elect, whom His Son has redeemed, and whom He Himself delights to save? He may bear with them long, He may long delay His answer, but at last it will come. "I tell you," saith Christ, laying emphasis upon it, "that he will avenge them speedily."

Brethren, let me urge on you the duty of perseverance and importunity in prayer. It is a necessary and important duty; a duty which is enjoined in various parts of the scriptures, besides my text. Take the following passages as examples: "I will therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (I Tim. ii: 8.) "Pray without ceasing." (I Thess. v: 17.) "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. iv: 6.) "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. vii: 7, 8.)

But, before I proceed to urge the duty of perseverance and importunity in prayer, there is a prior question which I would like you to answer, namely, Do you pray at all? It is vain to endeavor to urge perseverance in prayer on a man that has never learned to pray in right earnest at all. It is necessary to begin

to pray, before the question of perseverance is at all appropriate. And I am very much afraid that there are several here that live without prayer from day to day and from week to week, in fact, that have never learned to pray at all.

To all such, let me say, I hope you will not think me uncharitable, when I declare my fear that you are living "without God and without hope in the world," in fact, that you are in the "bonds of iniquity," your sins unforgiven and your souls unregenerate and unsaved. I cannot see the ground for believing anything more favorable concerning you that live without prayer.

But, let me ask you, Why do you not pray? Have you any valid reason for neglecting this important duty? I have no doubt you have excuses; but what are they worth? Are they worth anything? Will they stand the scrutiny of your consciences? or the tests of scripture? I am sure that you have been counselled to pray, and that your consciences have told you, once and again, that you ought to pray; but you have silenced them. You are sinners accountable to God, and can you afford to neglect prayer? You are, in fact, on the road to ruin, and can there be any valid excuse for your neglecting to pray for deliverance? Surely not.

Do you not believe that there is a God who hears prayer, and with whom you have to do? It may be that you have atheistical and sceptical proclivities. Well, there was once a French poet who professed to

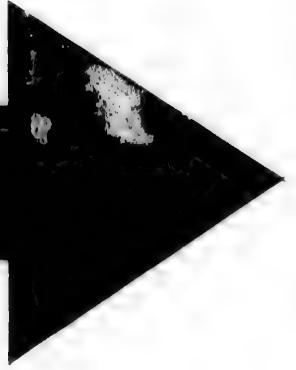
be an atheist and who could ridicule religion on dry land and during fair weather. But he was once caught in a storm at sea. The ship became unmanageable. For a time all hope of being saved was lost, and the storm scattered all the fine-spun speculations of the infidel to the winds, and he could be seen among a group of terrified and praying people, some of whom were Catholics who diligently counted their beads, and none more lustily prayed and cried to God for deliverance than he did.

But, perhaps that is not your trouble. I suppose you are ready to acknowledge the doctrine of God's existence, which none but an arrant fool will deny, and that also you believe the truth of revelation in a general way. Then why do you not pray? Have you no sins to confess and for which you need forgiveness? Alas! you have a multitude of them. Oh pray for pardon through the blood of Jesus! Have you no gratitude to God to express? How can you express it without prayer?

But you have excuses. Well, what are they?

Do you say that you are not worthy to be permitted to pray to God? Unworthy! why, that is one of the great reasons why you should pray. You are unworthy, then ask God to give you an interest in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. This unworthiness of yours will ruin you unless you be delivered from it.

Do you say that you do not feel your spiritual need sufficiently? and that you think you must avoid



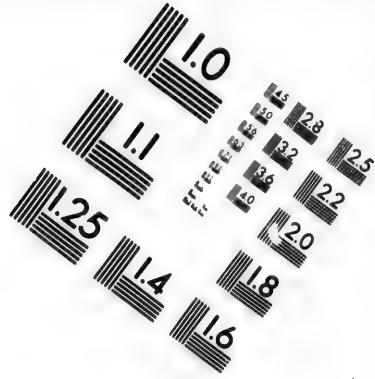
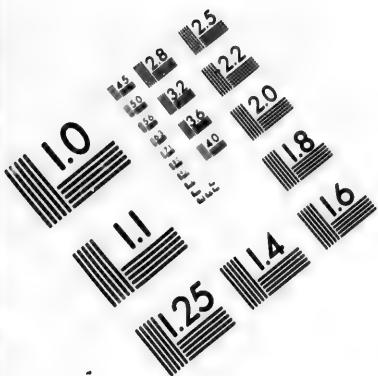
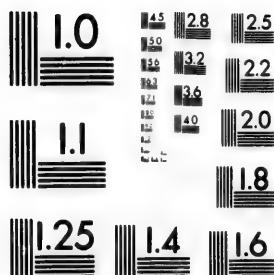
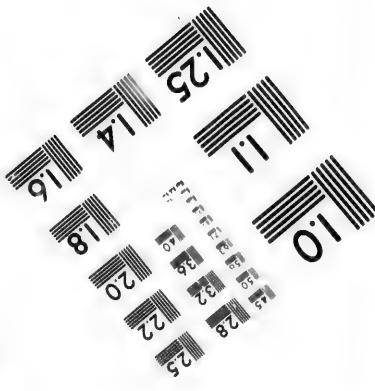
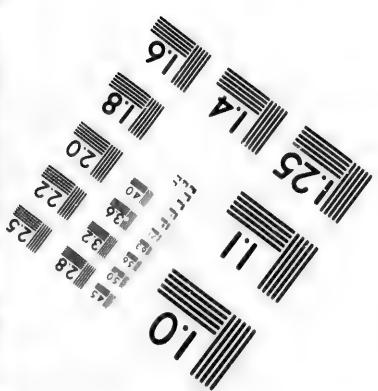


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prayer till you feel your sins more and your wants more. You do not feel; that may be so. That is a bad state to be in, and if you are conscious of it, pray to be delivered from it. Instead of offering an excuse for neglect, it ought to be an incentive to prayer. Ask God to give you feeling and sense, and an anxiety about your soul's salvation.

Or, perhaps, your excuse is, that you do not see that prayer does so much good to those that follow it, that you are as good as they are. And do you think that such an excuse is of any value? You look at others, you see so many faults in them. You are, in fact, an accuser of the brethren. You say they are hypocrites, and that you will be no hypocrite. And will you dare to appear before God and say to Him, I was no hypocrite. I did not profess to serve Thee at all, I did not profess to love, I did not profess to pray to Thee, and I was no hypocrite. I was just what I appeared to be, a man without love to God, without religion, without prayer. Will such presumption and audacity save you? I beseech you, continue in them no longer. Humble yourself before God at once, and pray for pardon.

Prayerless one, your excuses are all flimsy. They cannot bear examination. I beseech you, cast them from you. Neglect prayer no longer. Call on God. Knock at the door of mercy. Come to Him as you are, depending on the death of His own Son for acceptance.

And you, brethren, who avail yourselves of the privilege of prayer, let me urge to perseverance in this duty. "Pray without ceasing," "Continuing instant in prayer," are exhortations of the inspired word to believers. You may sometimes be tempted to "restrain prayer before God." From the lying suggestions of Satan, or the natural unbelief of your own deceitful and wicked heart, or the influence of the business and cares of the world, you may feel indisposed to go into the presence of God. But let not such influences hold you back. Trust the Saviour's word that, "Every one that asketh receiveth," and yield not to the doubting thoughts or feelings of indifference that rise within you.

Perhaps you are discouraged from not finding the degree of success in prayer which you expected, and for that reason are tempted to give up the duty. The teaching of the Lord, in the parable which we have been considering, is intended to meet this very case. He spake it to this end, that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." You see in the result of the widow's perseverance, what will be your happy experience if you follow her example. The Lord may "bear long," in your case, to prove that you are one of "His elect," to exercise the grace that is in you by your "crying day and night unto Him." He may wait till you have a keener sense of your own helplessness and a higher sense of the value of His grace; that you may be more deeply humbled, and that He may be more highly exalted in your estimation; but rich will be your

experience in the end, if you continue to wait on Him. "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you ; and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you ; for the Lord is a God of judgment ; blessed are all they that wait for him." (Is. xxx : 18.) Study the prayers that you find in scripture ; make yourselves so familiar with the inspired word, that you can not only use the examples of prayer recorded there, but that you can also turn its doctrines, precepts and promises into prayer. That was the practice which I found very profitable when I was a beginner.

And you on whom devolves the difficult work of the management of households, need to be much exercised in prayer, both for them and with them. "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it." And in order to be successful, your prayers and endeavours must be in the same direction. Your manner of life must be consistent, and you must diligently use the means through which your prayers are to receive their fulfilment. If you pray "not to be led into temptation," do not show your insincerity by willingly going into it, but carefully avoid the places and persons from which it is likely to arise. If you pray for the conversion of your children, let your walk before them, your intercourse with them, and the instruction you give them be all in the direction of that happy result. If you ask for the success of the Lord's cause, labor for its advancement ; use faithfully the

means which may have been put in your power for promoting it ; recommend it by the holiness and happiness of your life ; in suitable opportunities sustain it by the confession of the mouth, and contribute liberally of your worldly substance for maintaining the operations by which it is extended in the world. Whatever may be the chief object of your prayer, take care that you do not shut out the blessing, by closing the channel through which it is to come.

DISCOURSE XX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

John x : 10-15. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Ps. c : 1 ; Ps. cxix : 172 ; Ps. xxiii : 1.

YOU may notice that the parable of the shepherd and the sheep gets a two-fold or double explanation. In the first explanation Christ is the door of the sheep, and in the second explanation Christ is the shepherd of the sheep. The first explanation is given in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, and the second explanation is given in the verses which I have just read for the foundation of the following discourse.

At first sight it may appear to be a confusion of thought and illustration, for Jesus to call himself both the door of the sheep and also the shepherd. But when we look closely at the passage we see that Jesus

uses two distinct scenes in the pastoral life to illustrate relations between Himself and His people. The first scene is the sheepfold at night, the sheep within it and the porter at its door. The key to the spiritual meaning of this scene is the declaration : "I am the door of the sheep." The second scene is the sheep pasture, in the day time, the sheep roaming over it and the shepherd in charge of them, to guide, govern and defend them. The key to the spiritual meaning of this scene is the declaration : "I am the good shepherd," at the beginning of the 11th verse, and repeated at the beginning of the 14th verse.

Jesus is the good shepherd. He claims this title to Himself, and He also illustrates and vindicates His claim to this title. Let us see how He does it.

I. CLAIMING TO BE HIMSELF

the good shepherd, Jesus contrasts Himself with the thief. "The thief cometh not," He says, "but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

These words I may paraphrase as follows : I am not like the thief who cometh to steal, and to kill, and to destroy ; I am come to confer life. The object of the thief is to do mischief, my object is to do good. His object is to take away life, my object is to bestow life, and to bestow it abundantly.

In eastern countries, and indeed in all countries, sometimes thieves break into sheepfolds, or fall upon the sheep in the pasture grounds, to steal, to kill, and to destroy them. Dr. Thompson, the author of "The Land and the Book," tells us that, in the east where he had been for many years a missionary, robbers frequently come upon the flocks to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

Now if it be asked, who is meant by the thief? my reply is that he very aptly represents the devil, the old thief that came long ago, and that yet comes for the very purpose of stealing, killing and destroying. He is a "roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour." But we need not restrict the meaning to the devil personally. He is certainly the arch-thief; but there are also many other thieves employed in his service. The thief represents any enemy of God's cause and people, any enemy of the souls of men, who works for their ruin.

But what a contrast does Christ form to the thief, for He came, not like the thief to destroy life, but to give life. "I am come," saith He, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The thief of hell came and stole away, by his temptation, the precious life, but Jesus came that men may have life, and may have it more abundantly than if they had never lost it.

My hearers, it is the solemn doctrine of scripture, oft asserted, that men as the gospel finds them are

tries, upon , and The where s fre- ed to chief? , the s for ying. m he ning chief; n his od's who chief, t to right ly." ota- may n if ure, are destitute of life. Life, the true life of the soul has been lost. Men are dead, dead to God and to spiritual things ; "dead in trespasses and sins." But Christ came to bestow life, spiritual life, eternal life, and that in abundance. He is the life, the author of life, the giver of life, and he that believeth in Him "though he were dead yet shall he live." "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi : 23.) "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John v : 11, 12.)

Men and brethren, have you received life from Jesus Christ the Son of God ? He came to bestow life ; there is no other that can bestow it. Alas for you, if you have no faith in Christ ! if you accept not the life which He bestows, you continue in a spiritual death which unfits you for the home of the redeemed and the holy, and which makes you meet for no other place than the pit prepared for the devil and his angels.

II. CLAIMING TO BE THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Jesus contrasts Himself with the hireling. He says, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, but he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf cometh and scatter-

eth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep."

Sometimes hirelings were employed to tend sheep, and in some cases the owners themselves, or their children tended them. And of course it was more natural and likely for the owners themselves to be more careful, and to risk more than hirelings for the safety of the sheep. You have read of the encounter which David had with a lion and a bear when they attacked his father's sheep which he was tending. Often do encounters of that kind take place between shepherds and wild beasts or robbers. Dr. Thompson tells us in the "Land and the Book," that he himself had known of such encounters, and that he had often listened with intense interest to graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights between the shepherds and savage beasts and robbers. The pastoral life in the east could record such incidents, hence it was a source from which Jesus could borrow suitable imagery to illustrate His own care for His people, and His claim to the title of the good shepherd.

The hireling careth not for the sheep, because he is an hireling and the sheep are not his own. When danger ariseth he fleeth because he is an hireling. He will not risk his own life for sheep which are not his own. But the good shepherd encounters dangers, faces the foe, and will not desert his post. Dr. Thompson says: "When the thief and the robber come, the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand

and defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow, last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers, until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending."

This may give you an idea of the scenes from which Christ took the imagery wherewith to illustrate His own doings and sufferings on behalf of His people. He was not an hireling: the sheep were His own; therefore He cared for them, and like that faithful fellow whom the Bedouin robbers slew, He laid down His life for His sheep.

And, my brethren, this is the great proof of Christ's right to the title of the Good Shepherd, namely, that He laid down His life for the sheep. By this He showed His love to them and His care for them, in a remarkable manner. He laid down His own life for His people, and by so doing He procured the right and the privilege to give life to them. He died, but death did not long hold Him; He took His life to Himself again. The smitten shepherd soon rose and vanquished all His own foes and the foes of His people. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has

laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii : 5,6.) And thus He proved Himself to be the Good Shepherd.

My hearers, have you come under His care ? If so, you are under sure protection. There is in Him a kind heart to pity you in your troubles ; He has an all-seeing eye to watch over you, and an omnipotent arm to defend you. He being your shepherd to guide, govern and defend you, you have nothing to fear. But, on the other hand, if you have not by a deliberate act of faith and will, come under the care of this Good Shepherd, who shall defend you from the foes that seek your lives ? O, how shall we sufficiently bemoan the condition of those that have not Jesus for their Shepherd ! how can we warn them of the danger to which they are exposed. Ye impenitent and unrenewed ones, that are still without an interest in the Good Shepherd, why do you not believe in Him and put yourselves under His wise care and powerful protection, that He may save you and give you eternal life ?

(a) It may be that you do not realize your danger and your need of Him to save you. But you are in danger, and you need Jesus, whether you realize the fact or not. You are rushing on to ruin and you shall perish unless you obtain an interest in Christ, whether you now see your danger or not. Ah, my hearers, do not imagine that you are exposed to no danger in regard to eternity, because you are not conscious of the danger, because you neither see nor hear, nor

feel it. God in His word, tells you that you are exposed to a terrible danger ; and it is a great delusion for you to believe the contrary. God's word shall stand and your fancies shall be blown away like cob webs. How often do men in this world itself, come to losses and to calamities and even to death itself, in circumstances in which they are all unconscious of danger up to the moment when the evil suddenly overtakes them. Some years ago an excursion train was returning with its living freight. Two youths, in the buoyancy of their spirits, went on the top of the cars. They were amusing themselves, without any thought of danger. But the train was nearing a bridge which was too low to let them pass unhurt in the posture which they had assumed. The train rushed on, they were knocked against the bridge and death was the result. The peril was wholly unsuspected, but none the less real, and it ended in a violent death. And in those lamented youths have we not a picture of ungodly men in their relations to God and another world ? Heedless of danger, they are rushing on to ruin, and in their ignorance, or blindness or thoughtlessness, they will not come to Jesus to be saved.

(b) Or, again, it may be that you have some conviction of your state as lost souls, but you think that you cannot break away from your foolish ways and your ungodly practices. You cannot break away from old foolish ways and habits ! but if you continue in them, they shall be your ruin. I beseech you, make one

honest, determined effort to break away, and to come to Jesus in dependence upon the grace of God. Yea, put yourselves into the hands of Jesus as you are, and He will break off your fetters.

(c) Or, further, it may be that you keep away from Christ and have not become His sheep, because you do not know Him, because you have never understood that He is such a Good Shepherd as He is, and that He is quite willing to care for you and to save you. In that case, I am sure that you have never taken pains to study the proofs and manifestations of His goodness, which He has given. I beseech you, study this book, the Bible. Study the narrative of His incarnation, His life on earth, His sufferings and His death. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. Behold Him on the accursed tree, vanquishing principalities and powers and making a show of them openly ; enduring the curse of God's holy law, and receiving into His sacred bosom the uplifted sword of offended justice ; and be "not faithless but believing," (John xx : 27.) Throw away your indifference and wake up to a sense of the importance and the urgency of your case, and ere it be too late, come by faith and prayer, under the care and the protection of this Good Shepherd.

III. CLAIMING TO BE THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

Jesus illustrates His claims by a reference to the mutual knowledge of Himself and His people, and by

comparing it with the mutual knowledge which He and His Father have. He says "I am the good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." Or, as it might have been translated, "Even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father." That is to say, the mutual knowledge between Christ and His people, He compares with the mutual knowledge between Himself and His Father.

Here then, observe *first*, that Christ, the Good Shepherd, knoweth His sheep. He knows them as His own, as those whom the Father gave Him, and as the special objects of His own love and of the Father's love. He knows them individually; He distinguishes them from others, that He may lead and defend them. He knows their infirmities and their failings; He knows their troubles, their sins and their trials, their wants and their burdens, their fears and their perplexities. He knows them thoroughly, and He has determined not to forsake them in the day of their perplexity or their distress. He knows "their frame, he remembers that they are dust," that they can neither provide for themselves nor protect themselves from dangers. And He knows, too, how to deal with them severally and individually, in the way which will be most conducive to their peace and safety and happiness. "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Is. xl: 11.)

Observe *secondly*, that His sheep know this Good Shepherd. There is mutual knowledge between them; He knows them and they know Him. They know Him to be the very Saviour whom they needed and required, the Son of God, who, "though he was rich became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich," the bishop and the shepherd of their souls who gave His life for them, to satisfy justice, to exalt the law and to make it honorable, and who has spread out before them the green and rich pastures of His grace. They have an experimental knowledge of Him through grace. They know His will which He has given them in His word, and they strive to obey it. They know His ordinances, and they take delight in observing them. They know His character and admire it, and they are fully confident that they may trust Him implicitly, and that He is able and willing to save them "to the uttermost." Like Paul, each of them can say, "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. i: 12), and can sing like the Psalmist :

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green ; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

" My soul he doth restore again ;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake."

Observe *thirdly*, that there is here a very wonderful illustration given of the mutual knowledge of Christ and His people—it is compared with the knowledge which the Father has of Christ and He has of the Father. As I have said the words, “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father,” were better translated “Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father.” That is, the mutual knowledge of Christ and His sheep is compared with, and explained by, the mutual knowledge of the Father and Christ. Now we are sure that the mutual knowledge of the Father and Christ produces mutual love, mutual complacency, mutual delight and satisfaction. And such also are the fruits of the mutual knowledge of Christ and His people. Christ loves His sheep, and they love Him; Christ looks upon His sheep with complacency, delight, and satisfaction, and they regard Him with similar feelings and sentiments.

Brethren, we have now seen how Christ illustrates and vindicates His claim to the title of the good shepherd. It was no vain boasting for Him to say, “I am the good shepherd”; He has fully vindicated His assumption of that title. I make a concluding application as follows:

First, the subject is calculated to waken up in us a serious inquiry. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Is He ours? are we His sheep? Does He know us and do we know Him, even as the Father knows Him and He knows the Father? Have we such a knowledge

of Christ as produces in us good feelings and sentiments towards Him? When we look around in the community at large, we see plainly that many whom we meet with and whom we know are not among the flock of Christ the Good Shepherd? How careful should we be lest we ourselves be deceived, and imagine that we are Christ's sheep when we are not. My hearers, are you truly the sheep of this Good Shepherd?

Secondly, What a suitable subject is this for a basis of exhortations and counsels to those that are Christ's! To you let me say, the relation which Jesus here assumes to you, should yield you comfort, and should give you confidence amid all the sorrows and dangers of life, and in the prospect of death, judgment and eternity. Believer, your Good Shepherd will not leave you in the midst of dangers. Trust in Him. Count upon His aid when you need it, and with a true heart follow and obey Him. The nearer you keep to Him in the obedience of His law, and in the fellowship of His Spirit, the better for you. You are not your own, He hath bought you with His blood. Show by your walk and conversation, that you are His by a covenant that shall never be broken, and that you can say in truth, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Thirdly, This subject is a suitable basis for warning and invitation to those that are not yet among the flock of this shepherd. But I warn you, that unless you come under the care and protection of this Good

Shepherd you must perish. No soul of human race shall be saved but His sheep. "All but his sheep are goats, whom he shall at last send to the place of everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv : 33-41.) Would you therefore wish to be saved from everlasting woe, come into the fold of this Good Shepherd. He is receiving new arrivals from time to time. He invites you; if you come He will not cast you away. Come into His fold, therefore, by repentance, faith, and prayer. Put yourselves under His care and protection. He will lead and guide you. He will defend you from the thief and the robber, and feed you in the pastures of His grace. Amen.

Belmont, Oct., 1876.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XXI.

WAITING FOR THE LORD'S RETURN—EXPLAINED.

Luke xii: 41-48.

I MAY say that this passage is a continuation and an amplification of the preceding parable which we had here for the foundation of a discourse not long since. In this passage there is an application made of that parable to different classes of men. "Peter said unto him, Lord speakest thou this parable unto us or even to all?"

This question Jesus did not answer directly, but in response to it He went on to enlarge upon the parable, expressing Himself in such a way that it would be easy for Peter to see its application to others as well as to himself and his brethren—to ministers and elders, deacons and private Christians, yea, to all men, to the ignorant as well as to those that have knowledge. "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."

Here we have a description of the faithful steward and his blessedness. Blessed is the faithful and wise steward who discharges his duties in the position which he occupies, for at his Lord's coming he will receive a rich and an abundant reward. Even men who have faithful and wise servants and stewards reward them ; how much more will Jesus Christ reward those who faithfully and wisely serve Him. Surely He will reward them. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful," and when a man is found faithful, it is expected that he will receive a reward. Here then is an incentive to faithfulness in those who profess to be the stewards and the servants of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, you are Christ's servants and stewards. You profess so to be. I beseech you, be faithful. Whatever post the Lord has assigned to you, do not desert it. You each have a place in His kingdom. Find out your place ; ascertain the duty which Jesus devolves upon you and perform it honestly, diligently, faithfully.

There is a lesson here for each and all of us, and therefore :

First, I apply it to myself, I call upon my own soul to learn this lesson of faithfulness in the service of Jesus Christ. Ministers have need to be very faithful. They occupy a very prominent place ; a heavy responsibility rests upon them. Great and blessed results may follow their labors if they are ²faithful ; while on the other hand, if they are unfaithful, they not

only expose themselves to punishment, but they also involve many others in the same ruin with themselves. "If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch."

Again, I call upon you that are elders to be faithful. Watch over the heritage of God, of which the "Holy Ghost has made you overseers." Study God's word for your guidance. Set a godly example before the flock; and "when the chief shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory." Ask the Holy Spirit Himself to teach and guide you. Be ready always for every good work and faithfully perform it. O be faithful!

Again, I call upon you that are deacons to be faithful. Be faithful and you will enjoy the blessing, and Christ will richly reward you at His coming and in His kingdom. "For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

Yea, let me counsel you all to be faithful in the service of Jesus Christ. Whatever sphere you occupy do your duty, yes, do your best therein. And to encourage all, I ask you to observe that the faithful servant is blessed. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I tell you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." He is blessed, for at His coming his Master will richly and liberally reward him. The reward will

be rich and liberal, worthy of the Master who bestows it.

By way of contrast and for a warning, Jesus also describes the unfaithful servant and his doom. "But, and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and the maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken. The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Here was a description of the unfaithful servant and his fate.

First, Observe where the evil begins with the unfaithful servant. It begins in his heart. He begins to say, "in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming." Unbelief, doubt, a want of confidence in the Lord and in His promise of coming, begins to work in his heart. And when the heart has gone wrong, then step by step, everything else goes wrong. A man has stepped on a terrible declivity when his heart begins to waver. When he begins to think that there is no need of great carefulness and that the things of which he has been warned are not likely to occur.

For the next step is selfishness, pride, superciliousness, oppression, cruelty towards his fellow-servants and maidens. He "begins to beat the men-servants and the maidens." Cruelty, haughtiness, tyranny towards others, manifest that there is something wrong

at the heart. When the heart goes astray from the Lord, it is sure to harbor wrong sentiments towards men. When faith towards God and confidence in His word decay, then improper sentiments towards men in one shape or another will grow.

The next step in the direction of ruin is indulgence to the evil appetites and passions. The lusts and passions seek their gratification and they get it. The unfaithful servant now begins "to eat and drink and to be drunken." The barriers are thrown down, the fences are removed, the lusts and passions roam at large like wild beasts, and they seek their prey and they find it. The unfaithful servant that has become selfish, and arrogant, and tyrannical, he begins to revel in self-indulgence.

In these circumstances there is nothing in the way of the thunderbolts of judgment and vengeance. They may dart forth at any time; yes and they will come when he is not looking for them. For the Lord cometh suddenly and at unawares, and cuts him asunder, and appoints him his portion with the unbelievers. He was an unbeliever himself at heart, although for a season, he made a different profession. And now it is meet that he should have his portion with the unbelievers.

Brethren, what a warning have we all in these words of Jesus Christ, "the faithful and true witness." His words are weighty. Alas for those who disregard them. Oh, I beseech you, take warning. Look

carefully at the origin of all the mischief—the heart. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Brethren, see to your hearts. Arrest the evil at its root. If you take the first step in the downward course, it is very likely that you will take the second, and the third, and end in irretrievable ruin. No matter what position we assume, what profession we make, unless we are faithful, and continue faithful to the end, we shall perish.

Faithfulness, sincerity, honesty in Christ's service are necessary. A name to live will not do if we really are dead; a show of godliness without its power will avail us nothing. It is the faithful servant that will be rewarded, while the unfaithful servant shall perish.

And this faithfulness must continue to the end. It will not do to make a profession of religion and enter into the service of Christ, to continue in it for a season only. Alas! when men get tired and withdraw, they give signs of a coming disaster. "He that persevereth unto the end, the same shall be saved"; he that does not persevere must perish.

"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they shall ask the more."

Some of the commentators explain this part of my text as signifying the stripes for chastisement, and for correction which God lays upon His people. They do not take it as meaning the final doom of the unfaithful servants at all. I cannot agree with them in this interpretation. This is doubtless a continuation of the subject of the two verses immediately preceding. It is still the doom of the lost that is under discussion. And herein is the principle developed, that ignorance does not save from ruin, although it will be followed by a lighter punishment. Ignorance does not save from ruin ; on account of it God will mitigate the misery and make lighter the doom, that is all.

Sometimes, in their dealings with one another, men do things which illustrate God's dealings. Men act according to sense and reason when they ask much of him to whom they have given much, and when they require the more of him to whom they have committed much. It is reason, common sense, the rational faculty which God himself has conferred upon men, that teaches them so to act. God Himself acts in a similar way.

First. The obstinate or infatuated servant that knows his Lord's will and does not prepare himself to do it, shall be beaten with "many stripes." And what else can be expected ? Is it not a very bad thing for a man to go contrary to light and reason and knowledge ? What can be expected but many stripes, when

men who know their Lord's will, fail to do it? What can be expected but that much shall be required of him to whom much is given. Common sense ought to teach us that it must be so. In a similar manner men act in the affairs of life. And the Lord will in the same way and on the same principles conduct the final judgment.

Here is the principle: many stripes to him that has many privileges, that has knowledge, that has got warning; that knows the way of salvation, but that failed to improve his knowledge and other privileges. Now look at the application of this principle to ourselves. We cannot plead ignorance; we have knowledge, we have many privileges. Yes, and I declare that if any of us be lost, his loss and ruin will be a most terrible affair. Many stripes shall be inflicted on any that shall perish out of the congregation of Mosa. Heavy damnation, wrath without mixture, eternal punishment without any mitigation will fall upon any such person. For do we not know the Lord's will? See our privileges: From infancy we have known the scriptures; from youth we have had Sabbaths, and Bibles, and sermons and Sabbaths classes, family instruction, and church ordinances. Alas! if souls go to perdition from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, from any of its congregations, from this particular congregation of Mosa, and from the enjoyment of such privileges as we have, the place of woe will be heated seven times more for them. It shall be "more tolerable

for Sodom and Gomorrah," for the Africans and the Hindoos, and the South-Sea Islanders, than for them. Brethren, I beseech you, be in earnest, work faithfully for the salvation of your children, and of your relatives and neighbors.

Secondly, the ignorant shall be beaten with few stripes. Those that "know not the Lord's will, and do things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Stripes indeed, punishment, destruction, ruin, but not so terrible ; more tolerable for them that knew not the Lord's will. The poor African, Hottentot or Indian who has had no opportunity will be beaten, only not so heavily.

Brethren, how should we pity the ignorant. With what earnestness and liberality should we pray, and labor, and give, to send the gospel to the "ignorant and to those that are out of the way." I beseech you lay this subject to heart. Study it ; meditate upon it. Take an active part in the battle of the Lord against the mighty. Lie not under the curse that fell upon Meroz. Say in the words of the beautiful missionary hymn :

" Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny ?
Salvation, O, salvation,
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Hath learned Messiah's name."

Mosa, Jan., 1880.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XXII.

I. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS ENEMIES.

Luke xxiii : 24 : "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." Ps. cxi : 1 ; Ps. xxv : 8-11 ; 2nd ver. Ps. cxxx : 1.

EVERY event in the life of Jesus, and every circumstance connected with His death, ought to be full of interest to those who trust in Him as their Saviour. The history of the life and the death of Christ is a garden of fragrant flowers, emitting richest and sweetest perfumes to delight and refresh devout and intelligent believers. " His name is as ointment poured fourth ; and sinners who have discovered their lost and ruined state by nature and practice and who believe in Him as their Saviour, experience a sweet-smelling savor from this precious ointment.

Of all places mentioned in the gospel narrative, Calvary should certainly be regarded by Christians as the most interesting and the most sacred. Beautiful and sacred associations cluster round about Calvary. On that hallowed spot Jesus died to atone for the sins of men, to bring in an everlasting righteousness and to reconcile to God every sinner of Adam's race that believeth in His name. On that spot Jesus offered up to God "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor," by which He satisfied justice and exalted the law and

made it honorable ; by which He has vanquished death and him that has the power of it ; and by which He has destroyed principalities and powers and made a show of them openly. On that spot divine love met human hatred ; and in the beauty and brightness of its own nature the former rose superior to the latter, and offered up its earnest prayer for those who executed the sentence of crucifixion. And surely it becometh us to turn our thoughts and meditations frequently towards that interesting spot, and to the various incidents of that eventful day when Jesus was put to death that we might have life everlasting.

Every word which the blessed Saviour uttered should be esteemed precious, important and precious by every believer ; but His utterances on the cross are invested with peculiar sacredness and pathos. Imagine that you see Him there, nailed to the accursed tree, enveloped in suffering and grief, and surrounded by a motley crowd of Scribes and Pharisees, citizens of Jerusalem, and Roman soldiers, and can you suppose that in the circumstances in which He is placed, He will utter a word to which is not attached the deepest significance and the highest import ? During His trial He had preserved a marvellous silence, not caring to answer even to the false charges by which His enemies sought to secure His condemnation and to compass His death. And now that He is in the midst of His sufferings, can we suppose that He will utter a word but such as is full of meaning ?

There are seven sayings recorded in the gospels to which Jesus gave utterance while He was on the cross. The first of these is to be the subject of further meditations on this occasion, viz.: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And it is my intention, God sparing and enabling me, to deliver a discourse on each of Christ's sayings on the cross. And here, let us invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them to His people, that He may guide our thoughts and meditations on these interesting subjects, that they may be profitable to us all and glorifying to the great name of our adorable Redeemer.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Of Christ's sayings on the cross, this seems to be the first in the order of time. It was uttered while He was in the hands of those who took an active part in crucifying Him, or soon after they had accomplished the cruel deed. It is a prayer for His enemies; and on it I offer the following remarks and meditations.

I. THIS PRAYER OF CHRIST EXHIBITS HIS LOVE

and pity towards men, in very striking contrast to their hatred and enmity towards Him.

During His public ministry He went about doing good,—teaching the gospel of His kingdom, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, consoling mourners, and casting out devils from those

that were tormented by them. In all circumstances and on all occasions His ear was open to the cry of distress, whether it came from those that were personally afflicted or from those who applied to Him for their afflicted friends ; whether it was the cry of the leper or the blind ; the cry of the mother for her daughter, of the father for his son, of the master for his servant. Jesus went out and in amongst them a personified blessing, a living depository of balm for the wounded, health for the sick, comfort for the bereaved, joy for the sorrowing, and salvation for the lost. But instead of being universally beloved and admired, with only a few precious and pleasing exceptions, He met everywhere with opposition and enmity. His actions were watched, His words were criticised, His name was traduced, His motives were impugned, and His message was rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, the lawyers and elders, and by the majority of the people who were under their misguidance. At last the matter came to a crisis, and His foes laid violent hands upon Him ; and by heaping upon Him every species of indignity, and by nailing Him hand and foot to the accursed tree, they gave Him the greatest provocations to anger that could be conceived. But His loving and benevolent spirit rose superior to all provocations ; and instead of hurling anathemas at them and heaping denunciations upon them, He offered a compassionate and earnest prayer to His Father on their behalf, saying, “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

stances cry of personalism for of the or her better for them a for the beaved, But , with e met actions name d His risees, of the at last violent every d foot t pro t His provoca them red a er on they

Thus do we see, that the love of Jesus to men shines bright and beautiful, in striking contrast with their dark hatred to Him. And earnestly would I counsel you all, my hearers, to grasp that thought and to let it come with melting and controlling influence upon your minds.

II. THIS PRAYER OF CHRIST ON BEHALF OF HIS

enemies, shows that neither the thought of their cruelty nor the terrible experience of sufferings which He had, ever had the effect of banishing from His mind the great object of His mission, viz., to secure the salvation of sinners.

When man suffers, usually his thoughts are turned in on himself, and he thinks that all others who know him or who should take any interest in him, ought to sympathize with him, and to concentrate all their anxieties upon him. Either he actually forgets all other things under the pressure of his trial, or he thinks that he is justified in being indifferent on such an occasion to all those things which at other times are important and precious in his estimation. A twitch of tooth-ache, a spell of gout, or a pang of neuralgia will make the statesman forget his politics, the merchant his money and his business, the lawyer his briefs and his clients, the physician his pills and his patients, the philanthropist his plans of benevolence, and the patriot his country and his kindred. A severe paroxysm of

disease may, without producing delirium, make the mother forget her child, the husband his wife, and the lover the much-prized object of his affections.

But we have reason to believe that no other sufferings were ever as great as the sufferings of Jesus. We can have no adequate conception of the terrible load of sufferings which He sustained when on the cross. He atoned for our sins. But under it all His thoughts go out towards others, even towards the wretched men who were inflicting upon Him a cruel death, and who mocked and reviled Him when He was in His great agony. He had come into the world to procure remission of sins for men by the shedding of His blood in the midst of pain and torture, and He ever kept this object of His mission before His eyes. He spoke of it in public and in private ; He discoursed of it to the multitudes that flocked to hear Him during his public ministry, and His prayer on the cross on behalf of His enemies is a manifestation of His anxiety regarding it. Hence

III. THIS PRAYER OF CHRIST

is fitted to minister encouragement to two classes of persons ; first, believers, and second, anxious and inquiring sinners.

First, O, believer ! are you placed in circumstances of darkness and of danger ? Are you sometimes discouraged and in danger of being tempted to

think that the great and blessed Redeemer has forgotten you? Do you fear that because of your offences and short-comings He has been provoked to give you up, and to cease from His intercession on your behalf at the right hand of God? Turn your eye hither, I beseech you, and bend your ear to the prayer that comes forth from the lips of Jesus on behalf of His tormentors, and banish all your unworthy thoughts, fears, unbelief and misgivings. Think you, that He who prayed for His enemies, while He was in the very anguish of the crucifixion, will ever forget or neglect you who have learned to put your trust in Him, and to take Him for your Saviour as He is freely offered to you in the gospel? No, surely not. "He ever liveth to make intercession for you. Lose not your courage therefore, in the darkest and murkiest hour. Your Saviour lives. He sits above the clouds that hang over you, and He will in due time bring you out of every darkness, difficulty and danger.

Second. Anxious sinner, this prayer of Christ should minister encouragement to you, and lead you to come to Him, believing that He will give you His blessing and secure for you acceptance with God.

Some excellent commentators and divines say that this prayer is to be regarded as put up for every enemy of Christ and of His cause, of whom it may be said that he is ignorant of what he is doing while he is resisting the cause of Christ and opposing the gospel of His grace. Dr. Hanna, of Edinburgh, says, "Nor

are we to consider that intercession to those for whom in the first instance it was exerted. Wide over the whole range of sinful humanity does that prayer of our Redeemer extend. For every sinner of our race, if it be true of him that he knew not what he did, that prayer of Jesus goes up to the throne of mercy." Now perhaps that is not too extensive an application of this prayer of our Lord. I would not like to cherish a disposition to narrow down the marvellous grace of our Lord. I do not know that such an extended application of this prayer violates any correct principle of interpretation. And at any rate, encouragement may be drawn from this prayer of Christ for every anxious and inquiring sinner. Jesus prayed for his enemies even when they were engaged in the work of dishonoring and reviling Him, and when they were putting Him to death. Such was His benevolence, so full was He of the spirit of forgiveness that He prayed in those trying and desperate circumstances for His foes. But the grace and mercy in Him which prompted that prayer are in Him still. He is the "same yesterday, to-day and forever." And therefore the poor trembling anxious sinner, who is convinced of his sins, and by reason of his sense of their turpitude and enormity is afraid to come to Christ, should take encouragement from this prayer. Anxious sinner, surely you may come to Christ as you are, you may come with boldness, for He is waiting to be gracious. He invites kindly and graciously such as you are. He will forgive you Him-

self and He will pray to His Father to forgive you too. He will sprinkle you "with hyssop and make you clean." He will make you hear the voice of "joy and gladness." He will clothe you with the "garments of praise," and give you "peace and joy in believing." Thus run His invitations:

"Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters."—"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."—"Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me."

And here let me ask you, O anxious soul, what kind of invitations could be more encouraging to you than those which Jesus has actually given you? What more in the shape of encouragement would you want than to be told that Jesus invites you? that He is merciful and kind, that He even prayed for His enemies when He was in the agonies of the crucifixion? Do you thirst for peace with God; for forgiveness of sin; for righteousness and salvation? Are you weary by reason of sin? are you heavy laden with anxiety and trouble? Then come to Jesus. He will fill you with His salvation; He will give you peace and rest.

"Seek ye the Lord while yet His ear
Is open to your call;
While offered mercy still is near,
Before His footstool fall.

“ Let sinners quit their evil ways,
 Their evil thoughts forego ;
 And God when they to Him return,
 Returning grace will show.

“ He pardons with over-flowing love ;
 For, hear the voice divine !
 My nature is not like to yours,
 Nor like your ways are mine ;

“ But far as heaven’s resplendent orbs
 Beyond earth’s spot extends,
 As far my thoughts as far my ways
 Your ways and thoughts transcend.”

IV. THIS PRAYER OF CHRIST

is an exemplification of the spirit of forgiveness which He had been inculcating during His public ministry.

A forgiving spirit was inculcated by the law of Moses, but as has been observed by eminent commentators and critics, corrupt Jewish teachers put upon the text that inculcates it a detestable gloss. In Lev. 19th chap. 18th verse, Moses has recorded it in the following words: “Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.” “To this,” a certain commentator observes, “the corrupt teachers added, and ‘hate thine enemy’ as if the one were a legitimate inference from the other, instead of being a detestable gloss, as Bengel calls it.” But Jesus has contradicted this gloss in His sermon on the

mount, in the following words, "Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shall love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ; for He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. v : 43, 44, 45.)

Such is the law of love and the obligation to cherish a forgiving spirit as expounded by Him who spake as never man spake. Nor has He failed to exemplify in His own case this forgiving spirit ; for when his enemies cursed Him, despitefully used Him, and persecuted Him, and were even putting Him to death, He prayed for them. Well has Peter said of Him, "When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not." He had been inculcating a spirit of forgiveness ; and had been teaching that men should love their enemies, bless them that curse them, and pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them ; and now when He Himself experienced a cruel treatment from the hands of His foes—a treatment which was in every way calculated to irritate and provoke—He did not fail to exemplify the spirit of love and forgiveness which He had been inculcating. His teaching was not made up of vain and empty words, it was not an inculcation of duties which could not possibly be performed, No. On the contrary, He Himself gave in practice an in-

terpretation of the duty which He had taught. And this leads me to remark

V. THAT THE LORD JESUS

offering up this prayer to His Father on behalf of those that crucified Him, is a pattern and an example to all believers.

O, believer, awake to a sense of the obligation which rests upon you to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus, and to copy His blessed example! I do not think that I speak unadvisedly or rashly against the generation of His people, when I say that the spirit of love and forgiveness which was both inculcated and exemplified by Jesus, is not so extensively cultivated and exemplified as it ought to be. I do not say that it is nowhere to be found, but I say that it is not manifested as extensively amongst believers as it ought to be.

Brethren, I beseech you cultivate this blessed spirit. In this matter, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And that you may be encouraged to cultivate a forgiving spirit, observe, that you have not only the example of Christ Himself, but the history of the Church of God furnishes you with several bright examples of persons who in trying and severe circumstances were enabled by grace to cherish the spirit and copy the example of our Lord in this respect. The case of Stephen will readily occur to you. When his persecutors were stoning him, he lifted up his voice in earnest prayer on their behalf. Here is the narra-

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tive of the fact: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts vii : 59-60.)

Most men, and even many Christians, do not seem to be anxious to obey Christ's precepts or to follow His example in this respect. The most seem to think that they do well if they do not injure those who do not injure them; if, when they are not offended, they abstain from offending or provoking others. But the Christian rule rises much higher than this. It says, Do not return "railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." It says, "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." "Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. xii : 14, 19-21).

And further, this prayer of our Lord teaches us to be ready to put the most favourable construction on the motives and actions of others, and to fasten on any extenuating circumstances which may present themselves to our understandings. In this prayer Jesus pleads the defective knowledge or the comparative ignorance of those for whom He prays. "Father, for-

give them, for they know not what they do." The general practice among men on this point is, to take the darkest view of the motives and actions of those who offend or injure them. Frequently cases of difficulty between parties are made worse by indulgence in suspicions and surmisings. Many are ready to believe that those who offend them are actuated by very bad motives, and instead of looking for extenuating circumstances, they make things worse than in reality they are, by indulging in suspicions, and by giving too much play to their fancies.

My brethren, Christ has set before us a different example. Instead of denouncing His enemies for their malice and wickedness, He mentions before His Father, as a mitigating circumstance, a circumstance in their favor, that they did not know what they were doing. Although this ignorance was the result of sinful unbelief on their part, an unbelief which resisted the ample evidences of His Messiahship which he had formerly given them, yet He mentions it as a circumstance in their favor. He puts the most favorable construction on their motives and conduct. And were men to follow Him in this blessed example, with what tenderness and caution would they speak of the motives and actions of others, and how ready would they be to extend forgiveness to others, remembering how much they themselves need forgiveness from God.

Of course, this spirit of forgiveness is not in great repute among men of the world. Some say that it is a poor and craven spirit; that it shows great weakness

on the part of a man to be ready to forgive indignities or injuries which have been done to him. Well, as has been cleverly said by another, "If it is weakness to forgive offences, then God is the weakest being in the universe, for He is the most merciful, and He forgives greater injuries and offences than any one else has to forgive."

My brethren, let me exhort you again to follow the example and to copy the pattern of your blessed Saviour in this respect. Let them of the world think of it what they may, yet do you follow the example and obey the precepts of Jesus. In the words of Leighton, "Let the world account it despicable simplicity, seek you still more of that dove-like spirit, the spirit of meekness and blessing. It is poor glory to vie in railings, to contest in that faculty, or in any kind of vindictive returns of evil: the most abject creatures have abundance of that great spirit, as foolish, poor-spirited persons account it; but it is the glory of man to pass by a transgression (Prov. xix: 11), it is the noblest victory. And as we mentioned the highest example, God is our pattern in love and compassions; we are well warranted to endeavor to be like Him in this. Men esteem much more highly some other virtues which make more show, and trample upon these, love and compassion and meekness. But though these violets grow low and are of a dark color, yet they are of a very sweet and diffusive smell, odoriferous graces; and the Lord propounds Himself our example in them." (Mat. v: 44-48.)

DISCOURSE XXIII.

II. ANSWER TO THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT THIEF.

Luke xxiii : 43 : " And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Ps. li : 1-6 ; Ps. cii : 16-22 2nd ver. ; Ps. lxxiii : 24.

"**V**ERILY I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This is the second of our Lord's seven sayings on the cross, and I propose to make it the subject of our meditations to-day ; but it will be necessary for us to travel back a little way in the narrative to lay a suitable foundation for meditations thereon.

The cruel act of crucifying Jesus is over, and He hangs in pain and ignominy between two malefactors. But the melancholy spectacle, instead of softening the hearts of the onlookers, became an occasion for mockery and raillery. We are told that some passers-by wagged their heads and said to him, " Ah ! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself ! If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." And this raillery was followed by similar taunts and gibes from others. Even the chief priests, the scribes and the elders spoke contemptuously of Him, saying among themselves, " He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel,

let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now if he will have him : for he said, I am the Son of God." And so much did this railing temper prevail that it infected even one of the thieves that were crucified with Him. " And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ save thyself and us."

Had we not Luke's minute and detailed account of the conversation which took place between the two malefactors on the one hand, and that which took place between the penitent thief and Jesus on the other, we should naturally suppose, from the accounts given us by the first two evangelists, that the two malefactors joined in reviling Jesus. The following are the statements made by Matthew and Mark respectively : " The thieves also who were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth."—" And they that were crucified with him reviled him." But Luke tells us that " One of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him."

Two different explanations of this apparent discrepancy between the first two evangelists and the third have been proposed by commentators. First of all, it is to be observed, that the first two evangelists do not give a detailed or minute account of this episode in the mockeries wherewith Christ was treated ; each of them makes only a short general statement thereof. Then it is supposed by some commentators, in order to

harmonize the different and apparently conflicting narratives, that both malefactors at first joined in the railing, and that suddenly a change took place in the mind of one of them, so that instead of being a reviler he became a defender and a worshipper of Christ. But other commentators maintain that it is not likely at all that any such sudden change took place in the mind of the penitent thief, and that the full and minute account of Luke does not give any indication of such a change; that in fact, he did not join in reviling Jesus at all; and that the words "thieves" and "they," in the short and general statements of Matthew and Mark, are each, what "grammarians call an 'indeterminate' plural, denoting no more than the unexpected quarter or class whence, in addition to all others the taunts proceeded."

The second of these explanations I accept as the most satisfactory, because it does not rest so much on a supposition as the first does; and specially because there are other instances of the "indeterminate plural" in the gospels. For instance, in Matt. 14th chap. and 17th verse, we read, "And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes"; but from John vi : 8, we learn that only one, viz., Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said this: "One of the disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said unto him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" Again, in Matt. xxvi : 8, it is said, "But when his disciples saw it they had indignation, saying, To what

purpose is this waste?" but from John xii: 4, 5, we learn that only one, namely, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, exclaimed against the waste of the ointment. "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"

Only one of the malefactors, then, railed on Jesus. Although their community in suffering might have naturally excited his sympathy to such a degree as to prevent him from joining in the prevailing mockeries, yet by the working of some secret corrupt principle or disposition, he was prompted to join in the general taunting cry against the sufferer at his side. "But," as Dr. Hanna well observes, "he is not suffered to rail at Jesus unrebuked, and the rebuke comes most appropriately from his brother malefactor." He turns upon him and says, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss."

On these words which express the penitent thief's rebuke to the impenitent malefactor, I offer the following observations:

First, they contain an acknowledgment of God's existence and government, an acknowledgment of Him as one whom evil doers should fear. And it was well that even then this malefactor learned to fear God, and to proclaim His name as one whom his fellow sinner should also fear. Had he always cherished this

sensible, salutary conviction, it might have prevented him from perpetrating the crimes that had brought him to the position which he then occupied. But having been put under restraint for his crimes he was led to meditate on his accountability to God. He now sees and acknowledges that men should fear God ; and in this salutary conviction do we discover in him an element of true and saving repentance.

Secondly, In his words of rebuke to his fellow malefactor, he acknowledges their guilt, and the justice of the sentence of condemnation under which they were suffering. " And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." And here we have another important element of saving repentance. He confesses his guilt. He acknowledges the true character of his sinful and wicked deeds ; and he proclaims the justice of the sentence by which he was brought under the penalty of the law. He does not dispute the justice of his condemnation, nor find fault with the manner in which his trial was conducted. He confesses his sin and submits unresistingly and uncomplainingly to the punishment which he was suffering. In short, he is a penitent criminal.

Thirdly, He acknowledges Christ's innocence and defends Him against the heartless taunts that were hurled at Him. " This man," he saith " hath done nothing amiss." Whether or not he had known Christ before he had become a prisoner cannot now be ascertained ; neither can it be ascertained definitely on

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what grounds he rested his judgment respecting the innocence of Christ. But whether the facts and materials on which his judgment rested were few or many, he became quite confident that his ground was firm, and therefore he took up his position upon it and boldly asserted the innocence of Jesus.

But this man's faith in Jesus rose much higher than to recognize Him as an innocent and ill-used man; he believes in Him as the Lord of the spiritual and heavenly kingdom; indeed he believes in Him as the Messiah, and addresses to Him this earnest prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." In this prayer we may notice the following things :

First, He acknowledges Christ as Lord. And this acknowledgment was an act of faith, and strong faith too. When the multitude and his fellow malefactor are mocking and reviling Jesus, and taunting Him for His claim to be the Son of God, this penitent and believing sinner calls Him *Lord*. This was the very title by which the disciples were wont to address Christ; and by his use of it in the circumstances in which he was placed, this man must be regarded as expressing thereby his faith in the Messiahship and the divine Sonship of Jesus.

Secondly, He believes in the kingdom of Christ. He prays, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." His ideas of the kingdom may have been imperfect and ill-defined, but he recognizes it as a spiri-

tual kingdom—a kingdom in which he expects Christ to come some time after the pangs of the crucifixion are over and death has closed the present scene. He does not ask to be delivered from the crucifixion, he does not ask Jesus to interfere on his behalf now, but he says, "when thou comest into thy kingdom." Deeply conscious of his own sin and unworthiness, and convinced of the wrath of God which sin deserves beyond death and the grave, he prays earnestly for an interest in the kingdom.

Thirdly. His prayer while earnest is very modest. He is satisfied with asking the Lord to remember him. He does not ask for a high place in the kingdom; to be made to sit at the right hand or the left. Conscious of his own unworthiness of a place in that kingdom, he leaves it with Jesus to put him where He likes, to give him such a place or portion in His kingdom as He pleases. He simply prays to be remembered, knowing that it shall be well with him if Jesus think upon him at all, and receive him into His kingdom.

Let us now direct our attention to the response of the crucified Saviour to this penitent sinner's earnest and modest prayer. No sooner does He hear the cry of penitence and faith, than He answers it, though in the depth of His sufferings and grief. His divinity and kingly character are acknowledged, and it is enough. The penitent makes his petition, and the answer comes without delay: "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt

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thou be with me in Paradise." And what an answer ! There never walked on this earth in flesh and blood another that could return such an answer to such a prayer. It is a flash of Divinity from amidst the darkness and the agony of the crucifixion. It is a bold and unqualified assumption of divine and sovereign prerogatives by the crucified One, at the very time when His enemies are doing their worst. On this point, Dr. Hanna has the following beautiful passage in his "Last Day of Our Lord's Passion :"

"The lips may have trembled that spake these words ; soft and low may have been the tone in which they were uttered ; but they were words of power—words which only one being who ever wore human form could have uttered. His divinity is acknowledged ; the moment it is so, it breaks forth into bright and beautiful manifestation. His hidden glory bursts through the dark cloud that veiled it, and in all His omnipotence to save Jesus stands revealed. What a rebuke to His crucifiers ! They may strip His mortal body of its outer raiment, which these soldiers may divide among them as they please ; His human soul they may strip of its outer garment of flesh and send it forth unclothed into the world of spirits. But His kingly right to dispense the royal gift of pardon, His power to save, can they strip Him of that ? Nay, little as they know it, they are helping to clothe Him with that power at the very time when they think they are laying all His kingly pretensions in the dust. He will

not do what they had so often in derision asked Him that day to do—He will not come down from the cross—He will not give that proof of His divinity, He will not put forth His almighty power by exerting it upon the world of matter. But on this very cross He will give a higher proof of His divinity; He will exert that power not over the world of matter, but over the world of spirits, by stretching forth His hand and delivering a soul from death, and carrying it with Him that day into Paradise."

In the answer which Jesus returned to the prayer of the penitent thief we may notice the following things :

First, His promise is to receive Him into *Paradise*. What and where is Paradise cannot be definitely ascertained. But this much may be known respecting it, that it means that part of the world of spirits into which the souls of believers are received at death, and where they enjoy happiness. In the common and everyday language of the East, the word Paradise is applied to a park; a forest kept for hunting; a pleasure park; a garden of trees; and a delightful grove. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament it is applied to the Garden of Eden. And in the New Testament, both here and elsewhere, it means the place of abode for the souls of departed believers. Nor does it mean a place in which departed souls lie in unconsciousness and peaceful sleep till the resurrection; on the contrary it means a place in which

they are consciously happy. In II Cor. xii : 3, 4, Paul speaking in connection with the visions and revelations of the Lord which were vouchsafed to him, says, "And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth,) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." This language implies plainly that Paradise is a place in which there are life and activity, and interchanges of thoughts and sentiments ; in short, a place in which the inhabitants enjoy a conscious, happy existence.

Secondly, The crucified Saviour promises to take the penitent malefactor with Himself : " To-day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise." And perhaps this is the best answer that we can give to the question, Where and what is Paradise ? to say, It is where Jesus is, and it is what Jesus with His blessed presence makes it. Where Jesus is with the souls of His redeemed people there is Paradise, and a Paradise which is far superior to that earthly Paradise in which Adam and Eve dwelt during their innocence. In the earthly Paradise, intercourse with God was enjoyed by our first parents occasionally and at intervals, in the heavenly Paradise it is enjoyed constantly, without interruption. Into the former the tempter found access, but from the latter he is for ever excluded. In the heavenly Paradise Jesus and the redeemed dwell together in happy fellowship ; and His presence makes the place a heaven indeed for their souls. No tears,

nor sorrows nor pains, nor aches are there. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev. vii : 17).

Third, Jesus promised to receive the penitent malefactor with Him into Paradise on that very day. "To-day," says He, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise." What a happy day that was for the poor condemned criminal! The morning found him under sentence of condemnation and waiting to suffer the extreme penalty of human law, in the evening he took his flight a disembodied soul into the Paradise of God. No purgatorial fires were to be passed through from which the prayers of a mercenary priest would be necessary to save him. And yet if there be such a place as Purgatory, for whom could its purifying flames be more necessary than for this penitent sinner who had evidently so little time for sanctification? But no; away with such a notion; there is no such place. Even the penitent malefactor did not require it. The fear of God, the conviction of sin, and the faith in Christ which were working in his soul were his preparations for Paradise, and no purgatorial cleansing.

We now draw to a conclusion with a few observations of a practical nature.

And first, this subject should prevent us from losing hope of the salvation of those who repent, believe and pray for their soul's salvation near the close of a life spent in sin, and at the very time when death

is staring them in the face, and the realities of eternity are breaking in upon their souls. God is merciful and long-suffering, and waits to be gracious. He bears long with sinners, not willing that they should perish, but that they should repent and be saved. And if He brings ungodly sinners, men or women, into prison or to a bed of sickness and death, and if when straits press upon them, and death looks them in the face, their hearts, which were formerly hard, melt and tremble, and if they repent, confess their sins, fear God, believe in Jesus and pray for their soul's salvation, their sins shall be forgiven, and when death has closed the scene they shall be admitted into the Paradise of God.

Brethren, the question that shall settle your title to admission into Paradise is not this, viz. : When, at what period of your life, whether when you were young and healthy, or sick and dying, you did repent and believe? But the question is, are your confessions of sin and your profession of faith in Jesus, a true and genuine work of grace? Do you speak the true and honest convictions of your souls, when you say that you repent of sin, that you fear God, and that you believe in Jesus? That shall be the testing question; and therefore we need not despair of the salvation of a soul who repents, believes and prays even at a late hour; for then a genuine repentance and faith may come into lively exercise, and at once prepare the soul for a happy death and a glorious immortality. One case at least of a late saving repentance is left on

record for us that we may not altogether despair in circumstances that may to some extent be analogous.

But again, while the words of comfort in which Christ answered the prayer of the penitent malefactor leaves room for trusting and praying for the salvation of those who become penitent at the approach of death ; still, side by side with this case, and making a striking contrast with it, we have the case of the other malefactor for a warning to the scoffing and the impenitent in every age. See you not this hardened and impenitent criminal just in the same circumstances with the penitent and saved one ? Why was not his heart subdued and softened by his own dreadful position, or by the solemn scene that was before him ? There were just two of them ; one was penitent, the other was not ; one was saved, the other was left to perish, for no other view can be taken of his case. One received Christ's promise of admission into Paradise, but the other did not. And what practical lesson can be drawn from this but the following, namely, that it is as likely as not, that the man who spends his life in sin shall die as he has lived, a hardened impenitent and lost soul. How any man in the legitimate use of reason and judgment, can extract encouragement from this case to live in sin and to neglect his soul's salvation till his dying hour, is more than I can understand.

Unsaved soul, do you expect to repent, believe and be saved when you are on your death-bed, or a condemned criminal in the hands of justice ! Is that

your hope? And on the strength of this hope are you resolved to live in sin, impenitence, unbelief and rebellion against God now? I beseech you, look at this case on which perhaps you are building your foolish hope, and meditate on it seriously. There was indeed, a malefactor who repented, believed and was saved when he was on the brink of the grave; but there was another beside him who remained hard and impenitent, who made no believing, earnest prayer, and who consequently received no promise of admission into Paradise. Now it is as likely as otherwise, that you who follow the bent of your inclinations now, will be like this hardened and impenitent sinner at the last.

Hence, my concluding admonition and counsel from the whole subject is this: Unsaved sinner, repent and believe now. Delay no longer. You cannot begin too soon to attend to your soul's salvation. You may never be permitted to linger on a bed of sickness; you may not have such an opportunity for repentance and prayer. And surely you would not wish to become a criminal in the hands of justice, that the solemnity of your surroundings may soften your heart and lead you to repentance and faith? And even if you were to come into such circumstances, you shall never have the spectacle of ill-used innocence suffering by your side, to help to soften your heart, and to encourage you to pray for mercy and salvation. No sinner shall ever again hear the promise, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shall thou be with me in Paradise," in ex-

actly similar circumstances. That you know, my hearer, and therefore I beseech you, build no hope on this case of repenting and being saved at the approach of death. It were better for you to turn to God now, while you have health, and you are a respectable citizen. O, seek Him now ! Will you serve the devil while you are young and strong, and then offer the dregs of your life to Jesus ? Oh, disgrace not your soul in that way ! But now accept the grace of God ; repent, believe and live a Christian life, that you may die in the assured hope of everlasting glory. Amen.

Yarmouth, Sept., 1873.

N. McK.

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DISCOURSE XXIV.

III. CHRIST'S RECOGNITION OF MARY.

John xix : 26, 27 : " When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Ps. c : 1 ; Ps. xliii : 3 ; Par. xxxvi : 1.

THE work of the crucifiers is over ; Jesus and the malefactors have been affixed to their respective crosses ; and now the multitude and the soldiers saunter about or rest in groups upon the green grass engaged chiefly in reviling conversation about Him who occupies the middle place among the crucified three. And probably when the space immediately surrounding the cross of Christ became less crowded and the excited multitude, in some measure withdraw, the little group of women who were attracted to the spot by their affection to Jesus, drew near, accompanied by John the beloved disciple. They stand beholding their adorable Lord and Master, in deep sorrow. There was probably little said. Many words would not be necessary to enable them to communicate their thoughts and sentiments to one another. It is always so among friends in times of great sorrow and in circumstances of great solemnity. Have we not often seen how,

around the bed of sickness or of death, a motion of the head or hand, a word or simple phrase, is sufficient to enable one friend to communicate thoughts, sentiments and wishes to another. Sorrow quickens the understanding; the excited sensibilities of the heart sharpen the judgment; and wounds have tongues which speak both to the head and the heart of an affectionate friend. Mary and John are near enough to the cross to enable Jesus to speak to them without mentioning their names; and in two short and simple sentences, which strangers might have treated with indifference, He expresses feelings and wishes which are readily apprehended by their softened and sympathetic hearts. "He saith unto the mother, Woman, behold thy son? Then saith he to his disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Separated from the context the words of Jesus are, "Woman, behold thy son!—Behold thy mother." These words constitute the third of the seven sayings on the cross; they embody His filial and tender recognition of Mary, His mother, in the deeply affecting and solemn circumstances in which He was placed; and to enable us to meditate with advantage upon them, it may be necessary to take a review of the history of their relation to one another, as mother and son, up to the time of the crucifixion.

That son of Mary was in many respects a remarkable and superior son. Several events connected with His birth and infancy, marked Him out as more than

an ordinary son of man. An angel foretold to Mary His conception and His birth. Sometime before He was born she had a remarkable reply to the salutation which she gave her cousin Elizabeth ; for Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake in rapturous and glowing accents of Mary and of the fruit of her womb. (Luke i : 41-44.) She had supernaturally directed visits from the Shepherds and from the Magi, or wise men from the east, after He was born. (Luke ii : 16 ; Matt. ii : 11.) Wonderful prophecies were delivered respecting Him, by Simeon and Anna. (Luke ii : 25-38.) And Mary kept and pondered all these things in her heart.

Among all the wonderful and glorious things that were said concerning her son's future greatness, there was one thing that specially foretold grief and sorrow to the affectionate heart of Mary. The one expression that specially portended evil to her was uttered by Simeon at the time of the child's presentation in the temple. " This child," said he, " is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign that shall be spoken against, yea," (added he, addressing his words to Mary), " a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Beyond the trouble and anxiety occasioned by the flight into Egypt, in consequence of the murderous edict of Herod, very little is told us respecting the infancy of Jesus, till He was twelve years of age. The

record of that period is contained in the following short but significant statement, "And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." When He was twelve years of age Joseph and Mary took him up to Jerusalem to one of the Jewish festivals. In due time the festival is over, and they are on their way home, supposing that Jesus also is in the company. At the place where they were to rest for the night after the first day's journey, they missed Him, and full of anxiety they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances, but found Him not. Then they returned to Jerusalem in quest of Him and after three days' search they found Him "in the temple among the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." When Mary and Joseph saw Him they were amazed; and Mary, assuming her maternal authority over Him, gently rebuked Him saying, "Son why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii : 43-49.)

Now, my hearers, mark this reply. Mary called Him son; but He did not call her mother nor is there any record that He ever did. Mary called Joseph His father; but He did not acknowledge that relationship; on the contrary, He spoke of another Father, and indicated that the consciousness of another and a higher fatherhood than that of Joseph, was in full pos-

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session of His heart. Mary accused Him of negligence and undutifulness towards her and Joseph, but He gave no explanation or excuse for the course which he had pursued. In words which I have quoted, referring to His heavenly Father's business, He repudiated their interference. Nevertheless, He went down with them and was subject to them as before ; and Mary kept all that she had heard, and pondered it in her heart.

Of the eighteen years of Christ's life that followed that incident, we have no record. We hear no more of Him till John the Baptist entered on his ministry, and Jesus applied to him at Jordan for baptism when He was about thirty years of age. Neither do we hear anything more of Mary, till we find her together with Jesus and His disciples, at the marriage in Cana, of Galilee. On this occasion remembering the wonderful things that were spoken concerning Him at His birth, and seeing that He had entered on his public labors, and put forth His claim to be the Messiah, she ventures to suggest that He might exert the power that belonged to Him to screen their relatives from the disgrace which would fall upon them on account of the scarcity of wine. " And when they wanted wine the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come." Mark this reply. Who can look at it without feeling that there was discouragement, even a gentle rebuke therein. Presuming on her relation to Him, she ventures to

make a suggestion, and she makes it very delicately. But He will not have her to interfere at all with Him, in the exercise of the powers which belonged to Him as the Messiah whom He now claimed to be. Upon her disposition to interfere with Him in the use of His divine powers and prerogatives, He puts an instant, firm, and effectual check.

We never find Mary and Jesus again in direct intercourse with one another, till we come to the incident which is recorded in the text of this discourse. From the marriage at Cana of Galilee till the crucifixion, there is no record of any communications between them. On two or three occasions during His public ministry, incidents occurred which led Him to make reference to her, but there is no record of any direct intercourse from the date of the marriage at Cana till He was on the cross. On one occasion when He was speaking to the multitude that gathered round Him, "a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." On another occasion, "while He yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee." What they wanted to say to Him we are not informed ; but His reply to him

that announced their presence, is very remarkable. It seems in every respect fitted to condemn and check the disposition to attach undue importance to the position which His mother and brethren occupied by reason of their relation to Him according to the flesh. His reply was this: "Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister, and mother."

And now let us meditate on the kind and considerate notice which Jesus took of Mary when He was on the cross, keeping in memory the few facts of their previous history which have been left on record for our use. And,

First, Christ's recognition of Mary amidst the sufferings which He then endured, was an assurance of His love to her, which must have been very grateful and pleasing to her heart. The words which He uttered would assure her that He had still a strong and filial affection for her. His manner of speaking to her, and of her during His public ministry, may have excited some misgivings in her heart, respecting the continuance and intensity of His love to her; but His words on the cross would remove all such misgivings and fears, if any existed, and would soothe and reassure her heart. And certainly that was a dark hour for Mary, but those kind and affectionate words which Jesus spoke were like rays of light shining in upon a

dark place. And whatever shock her faith in His claims to be the Messiah and the deliverer of Israel may have sustained, like the faith of the disciples, after those few words of kindness were spoken, she would know that her son loved her still, since He had given her such an assurance of His affection.

And thus does the blessed Saviour show some special marks of His love to His people in times of darkness and trouble, after perhaps a series of providences which may have had the effect of raising fears and misgivings in their souls. Sometimes He directs the course of providence in connection with His people in a way that resembles the manner in which he spoke to Mary, and of her during his public ministry. At such times the course of God's providential dealings with His people becomes a trial to their Christian faith and love. But when the darkest hour has arrived, and when appearances are such as to make faith and love stagger, and cause sorrow and perplexity, then some turn of affairs, some favorable change in Providence, or some special opening up of the truth of His word, will act upon the souls of believers, comforting and reassuring them, as, we may well believe, the words which Jesus spoke upon the cross, comforted and reassured Mary. According to His own word, they that do the will of God, are His brother, and sister, and mother, and in their seasons of sorrow and distress, He will give them some tokens of His love as He gave to Mary.

Second. Again; these words of Jesus spoken amidst the sufferings of the crucifixion, were an expression of His thoughtful care and His anxiety for her future comfort, during her pilgrimage on earth. He wanted to make provision for her future comfort and therefore He spoke these words to secure for her after His own departure from this life, the care and considerate attention of another and a substitute for a son. Although He was in the anguish of His sacrificial death, and the burden of the world's sins was lying upon Him, yet He did not forget the desolation and the loneliness which would fall upon Mary after His death, and He wished to secure for her a home and the kindly attentions of the beloved disciple who was now to be to her as a son. He had no silver and gold to leave to her, but He had a hold on the affections of John, and He now exerted His power over him in her favor. "Woman," said He, "behold thy son!" And to the disciple, He said, "Behold thy mother!" They both catch the hint, and they both proceed to act on the suggestion made to them; for "from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Brethren, from the example of our Lord let us learn a lesson of filial and relative affection. Filial and relative affection, and a considerate care to provide, as we have ability, for those whom God has united to us by close natural ties, are a part of true religion. And let us remember especially, that no pretext of any higher obligation, should make us neglect those who

under God, have been the authors of our being. By His kind and considerate recognition of Mary, Jesus followed up in practice, what formerly He had been inculcating by precept. Do you not remember how He sharply rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for inculcating a practice by which children might alienate from their parents, the support which it was their duty to give them. Hear His words, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and whoso curseth father or mother let him die the death. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is corban, that is to say a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother, making the word of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have delivered. And many such like things ye do." Thus does Jesus condemn a cold and heartless neglect of parents; but an affectionate solicitude for their welfare, His word abundantly commands and enjoins. Brethren, remember both His precept and His example. Obey and honor your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Third, further, from the words of Jesus taken in connection with the way in which John interpreted them and obeyed them, by taking Mary to his own home, let us learn to think much of the spiritual relation established among the followers of Jesus by their faith

in Him, and to be ready to do good to those who are of the household of faith, as we have opportunity. There is no certain evidence that John was related to Mary at all according to the flesh ; yet Jesus committed her to his care, and not to the care of her own sons or relatives. She had sons of her own, and there were some of her near relatives among the disciples, yet Jesus did not make any of them her guardian and protector : this duty He devolved on John.

Two ends were accomplished by this arrangement :

First, Mary would enjoy in the home of John special spiritual advantages, because she would there have the Christian fellowship of one who seems to have possessed a great spiritual affinity with herself— one between whose sentiments and her own great harmony seems to have existed. He who was the *beloved disciple*, must have been a man of deep sympathy, tender affection and delicate sentiments and emotions ; and so far as the character of Mary can be ascertained from scripture, she was “ the most tender, the most faithful, humble, patient and loving of women ; but a woman still,” and consequently she and John were congenial spirits ; and the privilege of associating with him in his own home, could not fail to be profitable to her.

Second, By the arrangement which secured for Mary the comforts and advantages which the home of John could afford, a practical illustration is given of the duty which devolves on believers, to be ready to promote the comfort and welfare of those who are

of the household of faith. Here we have brotherly love, love to those who are Christ's for Christ's own sake, practically illustrated and exhibited, for an example to us and to believers in all ages. We ourselves have alighted upon a time when ambition and selfishness abound, and when it is therefore very necessary to point out and to enforce the duty of practically exhibiting brotherly love. Brethren, let me urge it upon you, both by this example and the abundance of precept on it which abounds in the Bible. Lay both the example and the precept to heart. I know that this element of the Christian religion is not palatable to human nature, and that even true Christians find it hard to relish it, because remains of corruption operate in them still. But those who are thoughtful and anxious to grow in grace, will not forget that "a cup of cold water given to one in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward," and that the awards of the great day of final reckoning shall be made on the ground of the treatment which we give to the humble followers of Christ, while we are on earth. Then the righteous shall say, "Lord when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And

conversely will the ground of the sentence of condemnation pronounced on the ungodly be, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Fourth. And in the last place; although this incident shows that Jesus loved Mary, yet there is nothing in it, nor in any part of the history of His relation to her, or His treatment of her, to countenance, encourage, or sanction the degrading superstition and idolatry that have gathered round about her name. There is nothing in His words of affection on the cross, there is nothing in any part of the scripture narrative, to encourage this soul-destroying and woeful idolatry. John took her from that hour unto his own home; but did He worship her? or does he give any, even a remote hint, in any of his inspired writings, comprehending books of the canon of the New Testament, encouraging the Mariolatry of the Church of Rome? Certainly not. The only reply must be a strong and unqualified negative, an emphatic—No.

Mary was indeed "highly favored" among women. Gabriel called her "blessed"; Elizabeth called her "blessed among women"; and she herself predicted that all generations thenceforth would call her "blessed." We call her blessed; we pronounce her highly favored; we honor and revere her memory; but we refuse to worship her; and we repudiate the authority by which we would be required to do so. In the words of Dr. Hanna, "Among all the earthly distinctions and dig-

nities that could have been bestowed on a woman, the very greatest, we believe, was that which was conferred on Mary. And to the reverential regard which this relationship demands, we are prepared to add the still higher regard due to her genuine modesty, her simple faith. Nor are we sure but that in the depth of our recoil from the superstitious reverence that has gathered round her name, we have overlooked and failed to do justice to the simplicity, the beauty, the retiringness of that piety which makes her among the pious women of the gospels, what John was among the apostles of our Lord. But when asked to worship her, to pray to her as the mother of our Lord, to entreat that she will exert her influence with her divine Son, is it possible to overlook that treatment which she met with at the Lord's own hands, when here upon earth? is it possible to put away from us the thought that in that very treatment, He was prophetically uttering His own solemn protest against any such idolatrous magnifying of the position and relationship in which it pleased God that she should stand to Him?"

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DISCOURSE XXV.

IV. THE FORSAKING.

Matt. xxvii: 46. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

Ps. cxvi: 1-6. Ps. xxii: 1-5. Par. xli: 1-5 and Par. xxv: 4-6.

THIS is the Redeemer's cry of anguish under the hiding of his Father's countenance. I believe that it is an expression the depth of whose meaning can never be fathomed by man. It marks the climax of our Lord's sufferings. Frequently has it been the subject of pious and devout meditation since the day when it was uttered. It is the opening of an abyss into which believers have long and frequently gazed without being able to see the bottom ; it is a source from which streams of sanctifying influences have issued forth to bless believers and to make them faithful.

The words of my text are solemn words ; and deep solemnity and gravity of heart and of action become us when we gather our thoughts around them. O how solemn these words are ! They constitute Christ's cry of anguish, the expression of this awful and profound experience when He was made an offering for sin, and the burden of His people's transgressions lay upon Him. Surely it is no light mood that it be-

comes us to approach these words. No, on the contrary let us charge our souls with a feeling of the deepest seriousness while we meditate on these words. I do not speak thus because I suspect the seriousness and solemnity of my hearers, but because I have a deep conviction that the text calls for a greater measure of seriousness and solemnity than that which we ordinarily engage in religious services.

But before we proceed with the words of my text, let us for a little consider the darkness that covered the land for about three hours, at the close of which the words of the text were uttered by the suffering Saviour. At the third hour Jesus was crucified. And from that hour till the sixth nothing unusual took place; but at the sixth hour, or the hour of noon, a great darkness settled down from heaven over all the land, and continued for three hours, that is to say, till about the ninth hour of the day.

This darkness was doubtless supernatural and miraculous ; for it cannot be accounted for by any physical or astronomical law or principle known to man. It was not an eclipse—could not be—for in the Jewish calendar the month always began with the new moon and the crucifixion took place near the middle of the month, that is to say, when the moon was full. It was darkness much like that which the Lord sent on Egypt by the hand of Moses. What was its degree of intensity ? what extent of ground it covered ? How it came and went away, whether suddenly or gradually

are questions that cannot be answered ; but it cannot be doubted that its causation was supernatural and miraculous.

A two-fold view of the significance of this darkness has been propounded by commentators, which I am ready to adopt as correct. In the first place, and in the words of Dr. Hanna, "We may say of it, and say truly, that it was inanimate nature, supplying, in her mute elements, that sympathy with her suffering Lord, which was denied by man. Man gazed rudely on the sight, but the sun refused to look on it, hiding his face for a season. Man would leave the crucified, exposed in shame and nakedness, to die ; but an unseen hand was stretched forth to draw the drapery of darkness around the sufferer, and hide him from vulgar gaze." The greatest tragedy that ever occurred on earth was then enacted. The only perfect man that ever lived since the days of Adam's fall was then suffering execution at the hands of unjust and cruel men. No crime had been proved against Him. His judge had declared that he "found no fault in Him." Nevertheless the clamours of the unrelenting foes of the innocent one prevailed against the vacillating Pilate, and he delivered Him into their hands. And not only was the sufferer a perfect and innocent man, He was also the Son of God most High, who had gone in and out among the people doing good and giving abundant evidence of his divine mission. Such was the Sufferer ! and what wonder that nature drew a pall of darkness

around Him. It was nature, or rather nature's God, investing the darkest of tragedies, in a gloom emblematic of its real character.

In the second place, the darkness has been viewed as an emblem of the grief and anguish of which the spirit of the suffering Redeemer then had experience, and which wrung from His breaking heart the exclamation, "My God, my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" That the blessed Redeemer had then a dark and terrible experience admits of no doubt ; and that there was an element in this experience, different from any that enters into the ordinary pains of dying, or even into the dying pains of any ordinary man, under the most awful physical violence, is a doctrine that admits of easy proof. In the line of argument that may be used to prove this take first such prophecies of the sufferings of Christ as the following, " His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." (Is. lii : 14.) " It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." (Is. liii : 10.) " Awake O sword against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts : smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered : and I will turn my hands upon the little ones." (Zec. xiii : 7.) These are prophecies of the sufferings and death of Jesus ; and surely they indicate an element

of grief in His sufferings different from the pains of dissolution which any ordinary man endures, under the greatest physical violence—different from the dying pains of the malefactor beside Him.

But the direct proof that the sufferings of Jesus were inconceivably great, lies in the record of His experience, which we have in my text; in the narrative of His agony in Gethsemane; and in the narrative of His sad and solemn meditations when certain Greeks desired to see Him on one of the last day's of His teaching in the temple. I proceed to review these narratives, reversing the order and taking the last first.

Soon after His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, certain Greeks desired to see Him, and made known their wish to Philip. Jesus was told of it. And in the words of Dr. Hanna, "It threw Him into a sublime reverie of thought. Bright visions of a distant future, when all men should be drawn to Him rose up before His eye; but with them the vision of a future then at hand—of His being lifted up on the cross. A sudden change comes over His spirit." The shadow of a great calamity passes over Him; and among other expressions, He utters the following lamentation, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; . . . for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." (John xii: 27.) Here we have the apprehension of some indescribable woe, a shrinking from it, a cry for deliverance, and a submitting to the will of the divine Father. A repetition

of this experience, in a greater degree of intensity He had, in the agony in Gethsemane's garden. On the memorable night of His betrayal, when He came to Gethsemane with His disciples, He took Peter and James and John apart from the rest, "and began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy ; and saith to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch. And he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed, that if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me ; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark xiv : 33-36.) Luke tells us that an angel appeared unto Him from heaven strengthening Him, and that being in an agony He prayed more earnestly ; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke xxii : 43, 44.)

And what was that awful cup which the blessed Redeemer so much dreaded ? It was doubtless the cup which the Father put into His hand as the substitute of the redeemed, and which He had to drink to atone for their sins ; the cup whose dregs He reached on the cross when He exclaimed, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." A cup it was, which contained some indescribable and inconceiveable woe, which pressed sorely on His spirit, and which must be carefully distinguished from the anguish caused by the physical violence which terminated in

His crucifixion. "He bore the wrath of God." The Lord "put him to grief"; the Lord "bruised him"; the Lord Jehovah of hosts caused his sword to "awake" and to "smite" this gentle Shepherd of the sheep; the divine Father gave him "a cup to drink," which, when He reached its bottom tried His anguished spirit to the last limit of endurance, and wrung from His heaving bosom the bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

On these words, as an appropriate expression of His inconceivable anguish, I make the following remarks: First, Jesus did not use the Greek, the language which was most commonly used, and with which He was familiar; but He spoke these words in the dialect of the Hebrew which the Jews used commonly among themselves, and which was therefore the mother tongue of our Lord. It has frequently been observed, that persons who know different languages, when their spirits are tried by some intense thought or feeling, most naturally use the language which they learned first, and at their mother's knee. Second, The Lord Jesus repeats the title, "My God," whereby He addresses the Father and claims Him even in the midst of His deep distress, as His own God. Third, He asks, Why He was forsaken. It is the cry of conscious innocence and of surprise. Yet this must not be pressed too far. There was a cause for all that He endured; and He knew the cause. But He, now under the deep anguish of His soul, takes shelter under

His own personal innocence. In Him, personally, there was no cause for the suffering, for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Fourth, The words which Jesus used are the opening words of the 22nd Psalm, a psalm which is full of the sufferings of Jesus ; as if no other words could suitably express His anguish, but those which prophecy had already prepared for His use.

Forsaken by God ! Who can understand the awful import of these words ? Especially who can understand their import, as they were an expression of the woe that settled down upon the spirit of Him who was the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God ? We, in our present state of darkness and sin and imperfection, may have slight and inadequate views of what it is to be forsaken by God ; but to Him who was the Father's companion and equal from all eternity, and who knew experimentally what it was to bask in the light of His countenance, the hiding of that countenance must have been the culmination of all woe.

I remark :

I. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

were for us ; they were an atonement for our sins ; He suffered in our room and stead.

The procuring cause of Christ's great sufferings was our sins. " He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastise-

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ment of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Is. liii : 5, 6.) He died "the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." (I Peter iii : 18.) Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness ; by whose stripes ye are healed. (I Peter ii : 24.) The scripture evidence of the substitutionary character of the sufferings of Christ is very abundant, plain, pointed, and convincing. We are sinners ; rebels against God's law and authority. We are in ourselves and by reason of our alienation from God, lost, ruined and undone. There is no help, there is no succour in us. But God in mercy appointed His own Son to be our Redeemer, and in the fulness of time He sent Him into the world to die in our room and stead.

The same thing is signified when it is said that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious. In the words of Dr. Hodge, "A vicar is a substitute, one who takes the place of another and acts in his stead. In this sense the Pope assumes to be the *vicar* of Christ on earth. He claims and assumes to exercise Christ's prerogatives. What a substitute does for the person whose place he fills, is vicarious, and absolves that person from the necessity of doing or suffering the same thing. When therefore it is said that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious, the meaning is, that

He suffered in the place of sinners. He was their substitute. He assumed their obligation to satisfy justice. What He did and suffered precluded the necessity of their fulfilling the demands of law in their own persons. This idea of substitution and of vicarious obedience and suffering pervades all the religions of the world ; which proves that it has its foundation in the nature of man. It is sanctioned in the word of God and incorporated in the doctrines therein revealed. And this proves that the idea is not merely human but divine ; that it is in accordance not only with the reason of man but also with the reason of God. It is an unfairness to use words in a sense inconsistent with their established meaning ; to say, for example, that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious, when nothing more is meant than that His sufferings inured to the good of mankind. This may be said of any suffering for the public good ; even of the sufferings of criminals ; and of the finally impenitent. Christ's sufferings were vicarious in the sense in which the death of one man is vicarious who dies in the place of another to save him from a deserved penalty ; in the sense in which the death of the Old Testament sacrifice, which was taken in lieu of the death of the transgressor was vicarious." (Vol. II, page 475.)

II. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

were a satisfaction to justice on behalf of those whose substitute He became.

And it may be proper to define the sense in

which I here use justice. Justice sometimes signifies general rectitude or rightness of character and action. In this sense, God considered as a being or agent, is just, because He is holy and good and will do no wrong. Again, justice sometimes signifies rectoral justice, or a due regard to the rights and the interests of subjects, on the part of rulers. In this sense God is just considered as a Ruler, because He has a due regard in the administration of the affairs of His kingdom, to the rights and interests of His creatures. Further, justice sometimes signifies honesty, that is commutative justice, by which a debtor is bound to pay to his creditor the whole sum of his debts, so much for so much, a *quid pro quo*. And lastly, justice sometimes signifies distributive or retributive justice ; that is, the form of moral excellence in God as Judge, which demands the righteous distribution of rewards and punishments, and which renders it certain under the government of God that obedience will be rewarded and sin punished. Justice, in this aspect of it, is also called vindictory justice, because it vindicates and maintains the right. It does not mean that God is vindictive or thirsts for revenge. No, but it means that the moral excellence of His nature prompts or moves Him to punish sin on account of its inherent turpitude or demerit, and irrespective altogether of any good effects which may flow from such punishment. Sin deserves punishment, and justice demands its punishment.

Now it is in the last sense I use the term justice,

when I say that the sufferings of Christ were a satisfaction to justice on behalf of those whose substitute He became. Justice stood as a barrier in the way of the return of sinners to God and happiness. Some say that the only barrier which stood in the way was the sinner's alienation of heart ; his corruption, enmity, impenitence ; and that the proper effect of the sufferings of Christ is the moral effect which they produce upon the hearts of men, making them repent and turn to God. This is what is called the moral theory of the atonement. This theory we reject and oppose ; for, on the contrary, we hold that the primary effect of Christ's sufferings and death as a sacrifice for sin, is its effect in satisfying justice and in propitiating God. The other barrier is indeed to be removed, namely, the enmity of the human heart to God ; and that is removed by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," but the claims of justice and the penalty of the law constitute the barrier which the sufferings of Christ primarily removes.

Christ, then, has satisfied justice. He has "magnified the law and made it honorable," so that those who believe in Him, are no longer under obligation to satisfy justice for themselves. The penalty of the law which was due to them is removed, their sins are forgiven and they are received into God's favor.

III. IT WAS LOVE TO MEN

that moved God the Father to appoint Christ to be the substitute of sinners, and that prompted Christ

to assume that office. There was no obligation resting either upon God to give His Son, or on the Son to give Himself up as an offering to satisfy justice and to reconcile men to God. Salvation is therefore in all its aspects a gift of grace, a gratuity to all who become partakers of it. With regard to both, the salvation of man arose from divine free-will, from the good pleasure of God. Hence we read of the love of God, which made Him send Jesus to be the Saviour of men, and of the love of Jesus who gave Himself up a sacrifice to expiate sin, to propitiate justice, and to effect a reconciliation between God and man.

I CLOSE WITH A FEW LESSONS.

First, From this subject learn the turpitude and the inherent demerit of sin. Look at it in the sufferings of Christ. Consider what it cost Him to atone for it, what dreadful sufferings, terminating in death, He had to endure in order to expiate sin. And if nothing but the sufferings of God's own Son could expiate it, who can comprehend fully its inherent turpitude and demerit? O, it is a vile thing which God hates and which He cannot remit without a sacrifice. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." In one view of it God does not forgive sin at all. It must be punished either in the sinner or in his substitute. If men therefore do not accept the terms of pardon which the gospel reveals there is no hope for

them, they must perish in their sins. But he that believes in Christ obtains pardon, because his sins were laid on Jesus who endured the curse of the law in his room and stead. "Christ," saith Paul, "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii: 13.)

We may understand a great deal about the evil nature of sin if we contemplate its existence and its effects in the world, among men, and if we meditate on the denunciations of wrath and hell, banishment from God and happiness, which are proclaimed against the finally impenitent and unbelieving. But there is nothing, perhaps, so calculated to let us see the evil nature of sin, as the cross of Christ, His sufferings there, and especially His cry of excruciation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

Second. Here learn the great obligation under which all believers lie to love Jesus and to obey Him. If He has suffered as your substitute in your room and stead; if He consented to be forsaken by God for a season, that you might be restored to Him; that your sins might be remitted, and that peace and reconciliation might be brought about between your soul and God, then with what great love should you love Him, and how devoted should you be to His cause! In the words of scripture, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

Brethren, I beseech you set your love upon this blessed Saviour more and more. And that your heart

may be affected and your love excited more and more, meditate upon His crucifixion and His anguish connected with it. Think of Him on the accursed tree ; forsaken by men ; suspended between heaven and earth as if He were not worthy of a place in either ; bearing your sins ; enduring the penalty of the law, and the withdrawal of the light of the Father's countenance from Him. Charge your soul to set its eye on the sight, that it may affect your heart and call forth your intensest love.

And as you believe in Him and love Him, see that you heartily obey Him. Obedience is the proof of sincerity. Your professions of faith and love cannot be accepted as sincere unless you obey. Obey Him, I beseech you. Remember how He said to His disciples, " If ye love me keep my commandments." " He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Hate sin, turn from it ; avoid evil and choose that which is good. Avoid the society of the infidel and the profane and the ungodly. " Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." " Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be kept away from you with all malice : And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv : 31, 32.)

And again, I beseech you value the ordinances of His house which He has given us and observe them and partake of them as you have opportunity. Espe-

cially would I ask to prepare yourselves for the ordinance of the supper which commemorates His great sufferings, and which we expect to be dispensed amongst us here at an early day.

Third, Let the unconverted and the unsaved see, in the subject of this discourse encouragement to come to Jesus for salvation—for forgiveness of sin and peace with God. Jesus suffered for sin ; paid the penalty of the law ; satisfied justice. God has accepted his sacrifice. The door of mercy is thrown wide open ; and you are invited to come in. Alas for you if you have to suffer for your own sins ; it were better for you if you had never been born. And yet that shall be your destiny unless you accept Christ and rest on Him for salvation ; the punishment due to your transgressions shall overtake you, and then a great ransom shall not deliver you.

I beseech you to have not that destiny. Flee for your life : Why will ye die ? Sin has been expiated ; God has been propitiated ; pardon has been procured. O repent, believe and be saved !

“ Not to condemn the sons of men
The Son of God appeared,
No weapons in his hands are seen
Nor voice of terror heard.
He came to raise our fallen State
And our lost hopes restore,
Faith leads us to the mercy seat
And bids us fear no more.”

N. McK.

Yarmouth, Sep. 20th, 1873.

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DISCOURSE XXVI.

V. JESUS ATHIRST ON THE CROSS.

John xix: 28. After this Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Ps. lxvii: 1; Ps. lxix: 16-21; Par. lii: 1-4.

“ **I** THIRST.” This is the fifth of Christ's sayings on the cross. It marks the turning of the tide of His sufferings. With the passing away of the darkness that had covered the earth from the sixth hour till the ninth, the darkest moment of the hour for which He came into the world seems to have passed away. The bitterest ingredient of the cup which the Father gave Him to drink, seems to have reached His soul at the time when He exclaimed, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me;” and from that moment the paroxysm of His sufferings seems to have begun to subside. The pressure of the awful load which was laid upon Him as the substitute of sinners, seems to have lain heaviest upon His spirit during the hours of the physical darkness ; and when that darkness passed away, the load began to fall off ; so that it was not in darkness whether outward or inward, but in comparative quietness, and when the light of his Father's countenance was again shining upon Him that Jesus died.

In the words of one from whom oftener than once I have already quoted in these discourses, let me say, "The hour for which He came into the world has run its course ; the cup which with such a trembling hand, He had put to shrinking lips, has been drunk to its dregs ; the powers of darkness have made on Him their last assault and been repelled ; the momentary darkness of his Father's countenance has passed away. As the sun of nature dispels the gloom that for three hours had hung around the scene, and sheds once more his illuminating beams upon the cross ; even so the light of an answering inward joy, comes to cheer in death the spirit of the Redeemer. It is not in darkness, whether outward or inward, not in darkness but in light, in full, clear, unclouded light that Jesus died."

A feeling of relief from his mental agony breaks in upon the Redeemer's soul, and with the commencement of that relief a consciousness of the condition of His body awakens within Him. The paroxysm of His mental agony having passed away the sensations of His fevered body began to attract His notice, and as a natural expression of the feelings of the moment He said, "I thirst." But the evangelist tells us also that He perceived that all things had now been accomplished which were predicted concerning His sufferings save one which the Psalmist describes in these words : "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." And the saying "I thirst" was therefore not only an expression of the bodily sensation which he had at the

moment, but also a saying deliberately expressed for the purpose of bringing about the fulfilment of that prediction of the Psalmist.

Let us endeavour to keep these facts before us while I make the following observations on the utterance, "I thirst":

First. It shows that the connection between the mental states and operations and the bodily sensations in Christ was quite natural and human,—that His humanity was under the same laws which regulate our own sensations and experience.

It may be noticed by any close observer of the working of human nature under any heavy grief, anguish, suffering or excitement, that during the period of its greatest intensity, consciousness of certain sensations of the body may cease, and that when the agony or primary suffering begins to subside or moderate, then other and subordinate sensations of the body come into consciousness, and their cravings and wants are realized. It is the same principle that operates in our experience when during the heat and excitement of some vigorous course of action we may receive injuries which we do not realize till the excitement dies away and our minds and bodies sink into rest. For instance, boys often receive injuries during the excitement of play which they do not realize till the play is ended, their nerves are unstrung and their muscles relaxed; and in the shock of battle soldiers sometimes receive wounds of which they remain unconscious till the engagement has ended and they are again at rest.

Now it was this same principle, we apprehend, that regulated the sensations of Jesus at the time when He uttered the words of my text. The tide of His grief and sufferings rose higher and higher, till it reached its highest elevation during the hours of darkness. During that period it engaged all His attention, so that He gave no heed to the gathering sensation of thirst. But when the waves of the ebbing tide began to recede, when the force of the Master's feelings was abated, then the lower and the less obtrusive sensation was realized and the suffering Redeemer exclaimed, "I thirst!" When the bitterness of the cup which the Father gave Him to drink was spent, and the load of His people's sins began to fall off, then the cravings of outward nature pressed themselves upon His attention, and as was very natural and entirely in accordance with human experience, the sensation to which He gave expression, was that of thirst.

And here let it be remarked in passing that this was an exhibition of the basis on which Christ's fellowship with His people rests. He assumed their nature. He was made "like unto his brethren." The laws and principles which regulate the feelings and sensations of men, operated in Him also, and regulated His experience. He was tried and tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. And we have, therefore, in Him, an high priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities and to whom we may apply for sympathy and succour in all our difficulties.

Second. The word "I thirst," taken in connection with and in the light of the prophecy of which they were a fulfilment, show us that Jesus though suffering, had full possession of His faculties, and exercised them to insure the fulfilment of all prophecies concerning Him, and to accomplish the great object of His mission.

The sensation of thirst suggested to Him that among all the prophecies which were written regarding the time and manner of His death, one still remained to be fulfilled. Though He was in the midst of untold sufferings, He had the full use of His thoughts, and He could keep His mental eye on the prophecies on the one hand and of the progress of events and incidents in connection with His crucifixion, on the other, resolving to leave no prophecy without an adequate fulfilment. Those prophecies were scattered here and there throughout the scriptures of the Old Testament, and especially in the Psalms and in the book of Isaiah. Those prophecies were numerous and minute. They predicted that He would be "numbered with the transgressors," that He would be "bruised for iniquities," that He would be made "an offering for sin," and the "chastisement of our peace would be upon Him"; they predicted the "shaking of the heads," and the shooting out of the lips at him," the "parting of his garments," the "casting of lots on his vesture," and various other details of the wonderful scene of His crucifixion; and when the darkest

period of His experience was passed He perceived that all the incidents of the occasion which were subjects of prophecy, had taken place, save the giving of vinegar to Him in His thirst, and in order to bring about the fulfilment of this one also to the very letter, He said, "I thirst." Thus we see that He had perfect possession of His mental faculties, and that He exerted them for the purpose of bringing about the full accomplishment of the prophecies which had been spoken regarding Him.

Brethren, here is proof of Christ's determination to leave nothing undone that was necessary to be accomplished to make His offering acceptable to the Father, and His mission in every way successful in procuring salvation for men. He came into the world to perform a hard task, but He did not avoid any part of the programme of humiliations and sufferings which was made out for Him. He kept His eye on that programme as it was contained in the prophecies and followed it out to the very letter. He was determined neither to forget nor omit any part of it that there might be no defect in His offering, and no flaw in the work which He undertook for the redemption of men.

And here, O believer ! is surely a source of comfort and encouragement for you. Sometimes you may have doubts and fears respecting the issue of your career and the ultimate success of the gospel of Jesus. Such doubts and fears are unworthy. I beseech you

banish them from your mind. And that you may be induced to do so, consider how careful Jesus was to exhaust the programme of His sufferings, to fulfil to the very letter all the prophecies that were written concerning His crucifixion; and think not that He who was so careful at such a time will omit or neglect anything that may be necessary to make His mission entirely successful. Will He that began so well and that attended to every item of the most arduous and difficult part of His undertaking, now abandon any humble soul, any penitent and believing sinner, that puts his trust in Him? Surely not. Prophecy predicted that in His thirst they would give Him vinegar to drink, and He took care that even that should not be omitted. And do you fear or imagine that He will now, in His exalted state, and when the anguish of the cross is over, neglect or overlook the wants and necessities of any penitent sinner, who looks to Him for grace and salvation? Does not prophecy abound in predictions of the satisfactory results and the successful issue of His humiliations and sufferings? Does it not tell us that He shall "see his seed," and that the "pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands"? Does it not tell us that He shall not "break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax"? that "no weapon formed against His people shall prosper," and that they shall condemn every tongue that shall rise against them in judgment? Now let us remember that these prophecies are to be fulfilled as certainly and as minutely as



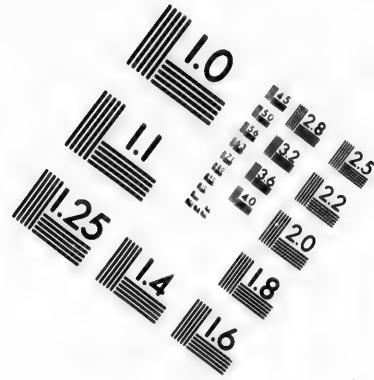
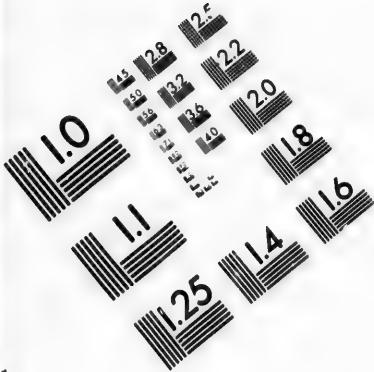
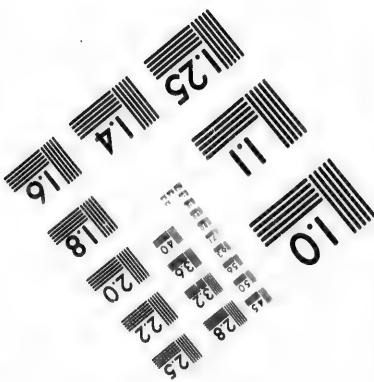
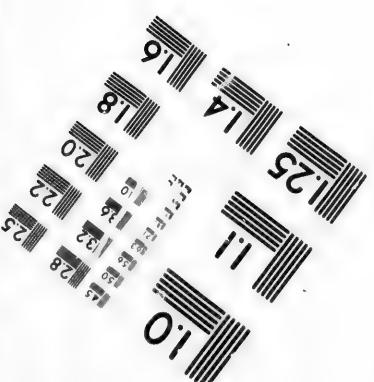
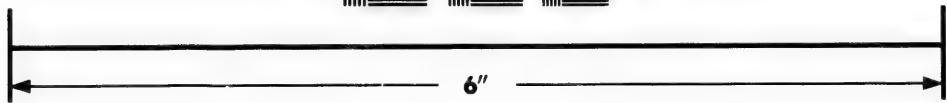
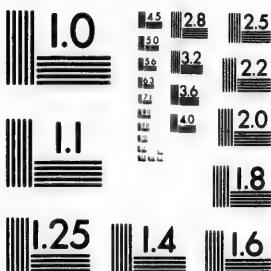


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those which were fulfilled in connection with the crucifixion, and that the fulfilment of them involves the safety of every trembling sinner that rests on Jesus by living faith.

Brethren, there shall be no failure. The prophecies which predict the results of His undertaking in the final salvation of His people shall be as minutely accomplished as those were which predicted the incidents of His crucifixion. Christ did not begin to build a house without first counting the cost, and making sure He had wherewithal to finish it ; He did not enter into a struggle with the powers of darkness without considering whether He had forces enough to overcome them. Success is certain, the victory is sure. Therefore, O believer, be strong and courageous. Attend to your duties ; be faithful to whatever trust Christ has committed to you, and leave issues and results in his own hands. He is faithful that hath promised. Fight thou the good fight of faith, resist Satan, crucify the flesh, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, be not ashamed to own Christ as your Saviour and Redeemer whom you love and whom you serve, and He will give you grace to make you victorious, and by and by He will give you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord.

And if Christ's determination to fulfil prophecy is fitted to comfort and encourage believers, it is no less to encourage anxious and inquiring souls. There may

be here some that have been convinced of their sinful and ruined state by nature and practice, that are anxious about their soul's salvation, but that have not yet seen the way to peace, and that are afraid that Jesus will not accept them, even if they be ever so sincere in coming to Him. For some cause or other they cannot commit their souls to God in Christ and be at peace. They have no doubt that Christ is able to save, and that He will save others, but as for themselves it would be too much to believe, that He is ready and willing to accept and save them. They see so many obstacles in their way. They are afraid ; they cannot get peace. They believe quite confidently, that Jesus is an able Saviour ; that He has made an atonement for sin, satisfied justice, and opened the door of mercy for man. But somehow or other, through the deceitfulness of their own hearts, or the devices of the devil, or some other cause, they cannot get peace in believing. They pray for peace, it may be ; they would like to be partakers of ordinances ; they think them happy that have peace, and that have boldness to partake of the sealing ordinances of the Church. But as for themselves, they must yet remain away ; they must cherish their fears and doubts ; they must be content to have sorrow and no joy.

Now anxious and enquiring sinner, let me plead with you, let me reason this matter with you a little, and endeavor to show you that Jesus has given you a strong ground of encouragement to look to Him and

be at peace—that when He said, “I thirst,” in order to bring about the fulfilment of prophecy, He did what may help you to cast all your care upon Him, believing that He careth for you. Was He so careful to fulfil the Word of God in that particular, and will He disregard all that it says to encourage anxious sinners like you to trust in Him and be at peace? What does prophecy say on the case of such as your's is? In the very psalm which contains the prophecy concerning His thirst, we have the following passage, “Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.” And along with this take other passages from the prophecies, such as the following: “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Anxious and inquiring sinner, think not that Jesus will be less careful to fulfil such scriptures than He was to fulfil the scripture that spoke of His thirst.

No, He will not. Take encouragement, therefore, and flee to Him for salvation. Approach the throne of grace with confidence. Betake yourself to God through Jesus. For all prophecies, both of the

Old Testament and of the New ; all His own teaching, all His ordinances, the history of His death, all the arrangements of His kingdom—these are all fitted to encourage you to trust in Him and to serve Him. Take Him therefore as your Saviour. Ask God to reveal His Son in you, and to give you peace and joy in believing.

Third, The words, "I thirst," were an appeal to the pity and compassion of those that surrounded the cross. Let us see what kind of a response did this appeal elicit.

It did not elicit a generous response at all. One wonders that the darkness in which they had so long been enveloped, had not a better effect on those infatuated men. One would suppose that the supernatural darkness which had continued for three hours, might have awed their minds to such an extent as to moderate their rage and silence their derision. But it does not appear that it had that effect. They heard Him exclaim in His anguish, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," and mistaking Eli for the name of Elias, or pretending to understand it in that way, they resumed their former heartless taunts and cruel mockeries. Matthew tells us that "Some of them that stood there when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." And from the

way in which Mark narrates the circumstance, it would appear that the very man who took the sponge and gave Him the vinegar took up the taunt and repeated the heartless words, "Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." How truthfully and graphically did the psalmist describe their heartless cruelty in the following passage, which I quote as it is in the metrical version of the psalms:

"To Thee is my reproach well known,
My shame and my disgrace.
Those three mine adversaries be
Are all before thy face.
Reproach hath broke my heart; I'm full
Of grief. I looked for one
To pity me, but none I found!
Comforters found I none.
They also bitter gall did give
Unto me, for my meat
They gave me vinegar to drink
When as my thirst was great."

Such was the heartless way in which these cruel men responded to the appeal which our blessed Lord made to their pity and compassion when his thirst was great. Oh what is man when left to himself. What is man when bigotry and blind zeal, and passion gain ascendancy over him! These men were for the time being at least given over to judicial blindness. The hour of this infatuation and madness and of the powers of darkness had come, and we see what desperate and cruel creatures it made of them.

But let us now cast our eye forward to the subsequent history of those times that we may find out how Jesus treated these men after His resurrection, and when he gave commission to His disciples concerning the preaching of His gospel. Did He say to them, Make no offer of mercy to those cruel murderers who imbrued their hands in my blood. Preach no gospel to them. Leave them to perish as they deserve without any ray of hope or drop of mercy. O no, the merciful Redeemer did not at all give such a commission; on the contrary He commissioned them to preach the gospel unto all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem." "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," are His words.

And have you not read how the apostles executed this commission, and preached the gospel to those who had crucified Jesus and made sport of His anguish and thirst when He hung on the fatal cross? Have you not read how Peter charged the Jews with being guilty of the death of the Prince of Peace, and at the same time offered them salvation in His name? Here are his words: "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that

Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts iii: 14-19.)

Brethren, on this I take my stand, from this text I take my authority, this text shall be my justification while I call on the vilest sinner here, the most hardened, the most hopeless in the estimation of men, to repent, believe, and be converted, that his "sins may be blotted out." Is there any black sinner here? any infidel? any scoffer? any man, young or old, who laughs at sacred things, any who has blasphemed God? any Sabbath breaker? any who has been "disobedient to parents, unmerciful, implacable, unholy?" In the name of my blessed Master, who died to redeem, I say to you to-day, "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." It is in ignorance, through ignorance, comparative ignorance at least, on the part of many of you that you commit the transgressions of God's law of which you have been guilty. Did you know better you would do better. Did you know Christ you would love Him and serve Him. Did you know God you would not blaspheme His name nor despise His ordinances, nor ridicule His people.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

VI. IT IS FINISHED.

John xix : 30 : "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar he said, It is finished."

Ps. xxii ; Ps. lxix ; Par. xliv.

" **I**T is finished." This is the sixth saying of Christ on the cross. It is a very important saying. It declares His work of redemption done and completed. It crowns and completes all the sayings previously uttered by Jesus Christ in exposition and in defence of His mission to this world and of His claims to be the Messiah. On this saying many an able and instructive discourse has been preached during the 1800 years since it was uttered ; and it has often been the subject of elevating and sanctifying meditation for earnest and devoted Christians of all ranks.

I think that this saying might be made the central proposition of a whole system of theology. For a full answer to such questions as the following might be made to include everything that would be required to make up a theological system : What was finished ? Who finished it ? On what principles and from what motives did He undertake the finishing of it ? What bearing has that which was finished on the glory of God ? What bearing has it on the present condition and future

prospects of man? What is required of those that would be benefited by what was finished? Are there some men that do not deserve any benefits from what was finished? and why do they not? What hindrances are in the way of those that are searching for benefits from what was finished? What encouragements do they get?

Of course, I do not intend to give exhaustive answers to all these questions at this time. Time and strength would fail, did I make an attempt to give such answers. I shall only gather around this text expositions, doctrines and counsels that may be overtaken in a single discourse and that may be suitable for us, in the circumstances in which we are placed at present. And may the Spirit of all grace make our meditations profitable and edifying to our souls, qualify and strengthen us for the duties of life and fit and prepare us for the exercises, enjoyments and companionships of the kingdom that is " undefiled and that fadeth not away."

First, I apply the saying, "It is finished," to the prophecies that predicted the humiliation and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the life and sufferings which were about to terminate in death, those prophecies were fulfilled. This application of the saying is naturally and readily suggested by the context. To fulfil a prophecy He said "I thirst"; to fulfil a prophecy they offered Him "vinegar to drink," and when He had received the vinegar He said, "It is finished."

Once or oftener did Jesus speak of the things that were written concerning Himself in the Psalms and in the prophecies, and declared that they must all be fulfilled. On a certain occasion He took to Him the twelve and said unto them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. (Luke xviii: 31-33.)

Prophecy had predicted many things concerning the birth, life, betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Minute details of the sufferings which He endured and of the humiliation to which He stooped, were given in the Psalms and in the prophets. Specially may be mentioned, as specimens of prophecies concerning Him, the 22nd Psalm, and the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. In these passages and others similar to them, the sufferings of Jesus,—the indignities which men offered to Him, and His divine Father's dealing with Him as the substitute of sinners, are graphically described. The saying, "It is finished," declares them fulfilled. It only remained for Him to die to perfect their fulfillment; His death was immediately to take place; and just before death closed the scene, and silenced Him in the grave, He bore exulting testimony to the entire accomplishment of the prophecies by exclaiming, "It is finished."

Secondly, I apply the saying, "It is finished," to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy. The rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy were types and shadows of which Jesus and His sufferings and death were the antitype and the substance. The types and the shadows were now fulfilled, for the anti-types and the substance had come. Jesus and his death met, answered and completed them all.

The epistle of Paul to the Hebrews is an exposition of this subject. In that epistle it is abundantly asserted and illustrated, that the priests, the altars, and the sacrificial victims of the Mosaic economy were types of Jesus and of the sacrifice which He offered up. In that epistle, Paul shows that when Christ came and offered Himself up without spot unto God, He superseded the priests of the Aaronic order and made it unnecessary for them any more to continue their services at the altar, because Christ with one offering up of Himself had forever perfected them that believe. On this question, I refer you to the whole of the epistle and recommend its perusal; but it may be satisfactory and edifying now to quote a few pertinent passages. We quote as follows: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he aught as for the people so also for

himself to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee. And He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedic." (Heb. v: 1-6.) "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron. For the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. viii: 1, 2.) "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum, We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man." (Heb. vii: 11-12.) "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once unto the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us." Pet. ix: 11 12.) In the same chapter, verses 27, 28, we read : "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered to bear the sins of many : and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

These passages and others like them, of which there are many, show that the antitypes had taken the place of the types, and the substance the place of the shadows. The Mosaic ritual had served its end and found its fulfillment. The priesthood of Christ abolished the priesthood of Aaron, and the sacrifice of Christ abolished the Mosaic sacrifices, the shadows were abolished because the substance had come; and the saying, "It is finished," asserts the fact. The economy of Moses having served its end and purpose was now brought to a close, and the mediatorial work of Christ stood forth as securing for ever the sanctification and complete salvation of all that believe.

Thirdly, I apply the saying, "It is finished," to the demands of justice and the claims of the law; justice was now satisfied, and the law was exalted and made honourable; for an atonement was made for sin.

Man had offended justice, man had broken the law. The covenant of works which would have secured for man life had perfect obedience been rendered to it, had been violated. Justice demanded the punishment of the guilty, and the law denounced against them its curse and condemnation. No flesh living could be justified by the deeds of the law. In these circumstances man must perish unless wisdom devise a plan by which grace and mercy can be made to prevail. Divine wisdom devised such a plan, and divine sovereignty adopted it; the Son of God was appointed to be the substitute of the guilty, to pay the penalty of the law

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in their room and stead, and to work out for them a righteousness which is unto all and upon all them that believe. And the saying, "It is finished," asserts that the penalty was paid and that justice was satisfied, and that the law was exalted and made honourable.

"Tis finished—the Messiah dies
For sins, but not His own ;
The great redemption is complete
And Satan's power o'erthrown.

"Tis finished—all His groans are past ;
His blood, His pains and toils,
Have fully vanquished all our foes,
And crowned Him with their spoils.

"Tis finished—legal worship ends
And gospel ages run ;
All old things now are passed away,
And a new world begun."

Hence, *fourthly*, I apply the saying, "It is finished" to the opening of the door of mercy for the guilty of Adam's race. The door of mercy has been opened wide that the guilty may enter in and be saved. Mercy has found an outlet ; it can now go forth towards the undeserving and the sinful. The work by which the barrier that was in its way was thrown down has been completed. There is now no barrier ; the way is clear ; the obstructions have been removed ; mercy and grace prevail ; the redemption is complete and salvation has been secured.

And, oh, what a sad condition were ours had not

the door of mercy been opened ! Pitiful and lamentable were our condition had not mercy prevailed and had its door not been open to admit us. We were under the curse, under condemnation, without God and without hope. I read a story about a man that was walking on the rocks near the sea when the tide was out. He stumbled heavily into a crevice or slit in the rock and could not pull his foot out. He cried for help ; there was no one near. The tide was returning. It drew near and nearer. By and by it came round him. Inch by inch it was rising. He called aloud to the passing boats in the distance, he waved his hat and made every possible demonstration to attract attention. But no one heard, no one saw. The sea rose and rose. It came to his waist ; it reached his breast. Slowly but surely it rose, till it covered him and he perished, fast to the rock as if he had been chained thereto.

Now the condition and the end of that man were only a faint image of our state before God, and in the prospect of eternity, had not the door of mercy been opened. Chained to sin and the doom of the wicked we should have perished without remedy. So are the angels that kept not their first estate kept in chains of darkness against the judgment of the great day. And had not the door of mercy been opened, our state and prospects were no better than theirs. But the door of mercy has been opened. Jesus has finished His work ; He has achieved His great undertaking. He has left nothing undone that was necessary to be performed to

make His mission prosperous and to purchase complete redemption for the sinful sons of men.

And now what remains for me to do but to make a practical application of this interesting subject.

First then, I beseech you admire the magnanimous spirit, the fortitude and the zeal for the salvation of men and the glory of God, which carried Jesus through all His painful experience till He was able to exclaim triumphantly, "It is finished." It was not a light matter that made Jesus pray, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done." It was no light matter that made Him say when He contemplated the death which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glory thy name." (John xii: 27.) It was no light matter that made Jesus exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." Who can conceive? who can realize? who can imagine all the pains and pangs and sorrows which were implied in the expression, "It is finished." There never was such an undertaking essayed by man or angel as that which was being completed by Jesus, when he said, "It is finished." Therefore, brethren, admire the zeal and the fortitude which carried Jesus through.

Again, I beseech you that intend to go to the Lord's table to-day, prepare to partake of the holy ordinance with faith in Christ, and with gratitude and

love to Him, for the great work which He undertook and finished on your behalf. Prepare to partake of the symbols of His broken body and shed blood in holy confidence, yet in deep humility. The ordinance is a memorial of Him who finished the great work of your redemption. Be filled with love, be filled with joy, be filled with zeal for the glory of Christ while you observe it ; and resolve to obey His precepts and to copy His example all your days.

Thirdly, I beseech you that are yet undecided and unsaved, accept now the finished work of Christ for your soul's salvation.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

VII. COMMENDING HIS SPIRIT TO THE FATHER.

Luke xxiii : 46. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ; and having said this, he gave up the ghost."

" **F**AITHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit "

This is the seventh and last saying of our blessed Lord on the cross. His soul has emerged from the mysterious horrors which had seized Him, and under whose pressure He had exclaimed, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ! " In that exclamation He had used the title, " My God," but now He returns to the appellation of " Father," which I think I may say is more endearing than the other. In His agony of the sense of being forsaken, He uses the title " My God," but now that the darkness is past, He cheerfully and trustingly commends His spirit into the hands of His " Father."

And what have we here for a topic of discourse and meditation to-day ? We have the Lord Jesus, by His own blessed example, teaching His people how they may cheerfully and confidently commit their spirits into the hands of their heavenly Father, or in other words how they may peacefully and hopefully die. By the words, " It is finished," He takes His leave of this

world, having accomplished the great work of human redemption which the Father entrusted to Him, and by the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," He resigns Himself in glorious sublimity into the arms that are ready to receive Him and to support Him in the new world, and the new state of existence into which He is about to enter.

It is the human nature of Christ, as I apprehend, that thus speaks, when the spirit is about to take its departure into the world above. At this moment the anxious spirit looks out with solemn solicitude for someone into whose hands it may cheerfully and confidently commit itself. Such an one Jesus finds in that blessed Father who had sent Him, and who was always well pleased with Him. He it is into whose hands His spirit may be commended. There is no other who can rescue it and take care of it. And following His example, believers may commend their departing spirits into the hands of the same Father, whose children they are by the regeneration; or what is similar and equally appropriate, now that Jesus Himself is on the throne with his Father, slightly changing the form of this dying prayer, they may commend their departing spirits into the hands of Jesus Himself, saying with the first martyr, Stephen, who called upon God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

In addressing you further from these words of Jesus, in dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit, I invite you

I. TO CONSIDER WHAT IT IS TO DIE.

What is it to die? Well, hereby I have started an inquiry which I cannot fully investigate. No one that has not gone through the experience, if experience I may call it, can fully comprehend or declare what it is to die. But although I cannot fully declare what it is to die, I can say a good many things about it, that may be edifying and profitable to my hearers.

For one thing, I can say that it is a most solemn and serious thing to die, and that he must be a fool indeed that can mock at death and throw himself recklessly and unbidden into his arms. Nor is his folly much less who has banished the thought of death from his mind, and is living for this world without God and without hope, and making no preparation for the hour of his dying. O, my hearers, do not make light of death. Do not banish the thought of it from your mind, but diligently and prayerfully make preparation for that solemn hour, when your spirit shall take its departure from this world to that which is above.

What is death? Imagine that you stand beside the death-bed of a fellow creature, and ask yourself the question, what is now happening to him? You can't say what exactly is meant by the separation of the soul from the body. But you can say that the dying man is leaving this world, that he is leaving behind him friends, relatives, companions, associations, riches, pleasures—all temporal interests and concerns; yes, he is leaving

behind him the very body which has been the instrument and medium of his intercourse with the world and its affairs ever since he had a being, and he is departing a disembodied spirit, into a new, and to him an untried world. He is taking his departure into a world of which none of us know anything, but what the word of God reveals to us.

O, surely this is a solemn moment to the departing spirit ! What is it to be hereafter ? what is to become of it ? where will it be ? where will it dwell ? what will its state be beyond the grave ? It is going through the portals of death ; it is entering on the realities of eternity. O, what are these ? Will it be annihilated, or will it have a conscious existence ? and if so, whether will it be happy or miserable ? or will it have a mixture of the two ?

Now, my brethren, let me say to you, that we are all in the dark concerning all these matters, unless we accept the information which the Bible conveys to us. Shove the Bible to one side ; put it out of the light ; make it stand away in the distance, and then look down into the grave and beyond death into eternity, and what do you see or know, or what can you ascertain concerning man's destiny for the future ? Why you are entirely in the dark ; you know nothing at all. You are left entirely to conjecture, and doubt, and hesitation. But take this blessed book, open it, let its light shine upon the bed of death and prospects beyond the grave, and you can ascertain most assuredly that the

departing spirit goes either to heaven or to hell, to the kingdom undefiled, or to the place of damned souls.

II. LOOK AT THE LORD JESUS DYING,

hear His dying words, and learn from them, how you may die in the sure hope of an everlasting inheritance among the saints in light. From these words of Jesus, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Learn,

First, To put a great value on the spirit that is within you. There is a spirit in man, a something which leaves the body at death, a something which does not lie with the body in the grave. Prize highly this spirit. It is your own self, your soul; your conscious, intelligent and rational being. Think much of it, value it. God attaches great value to it. It is an awful thing to lose it. It is an awful thing for it to go, at death, anywhere but into the hands of God the Father of our spirits and the former of our bodies. "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul," or "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Secondly, Learn from the words of Jesus to look up unto God as your Father. Come to Him as children to a father. Nor should we be satisfied with recognizing God as our Father on the ground of His being our Creator and benefactor; but we should seek to have Him for our Father spiritually, by the regeneration. He is, in this sense, the Father of all true believers.

Recognize Him as such, approach Him as such, look up to Him as such, and be ready to commend your spirits into His hands at death, because He is your Father by the regeneration.

And if He is your Father and you are His children, and you have the prospect of commanding your spirits into His hands, will you not now live as His children? Be in the world as His children, and then, when you die, He will receive your spirits.

And as for those of you that have not been regenerated and redeemed, call upon God that He may give you the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to renew the soul, to change you from aliens and strangers, into the children of God most High. Believe in Jesus and He will make you the children of God. For "to them that believed in Him gave He power to become the sons of God. Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i: 12, 13.)

Thirdly, From the words of Jesus learn to conquer your natural aversion to dying.

There is an aversion to dying, natural to man, but Christian faith will overcome this natural aversion, and enable the believer to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. xv: 55.)

Here it may be interesting for us to trace some of the reasons for the aversion to dying, which is so common to men. The soul is unwilling to part with

the body. It is Christian faith that will overcome this unwillingness. Now, what are the reasons for this unwillingness which grace will overcome?

First. There seems to be an instinctive clinging to life implanted in man by his Creator. This instinctive clinging to life is in all living creatures. It is common to man and beasts.

Secondly. There is a rational aversion to dying in man; that is, an aversion founded on certain rational considerations.

(a) The body has been the instrument of the soul's acts and operations ever since it came into being. And not only does the soul perform by means of the body, such outward acts as walking, speaking, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, but even the internal acts of thinking, remembering, imagining, reasoning, hating, wishing, loving, the soul performs by means of the body. No wonder that it should, therefore, have a loathing to depart from the body.

(b) There is a most close, near and firm union between the soul and the body, which the soul naturally and rationally seeks to perpetuate. But the scriptures set before us reasons why we should be willing to have this union disturbed. The soul will not reach its perfect wholeness until this union is broken. And after it is broken the body is still Christ's, and will be raised at the resurrection and united with the soul. The separation will only be for a season.

(c) The soul knows nothing by its own experi-

ence of what its operations and experiences shall be after death, and therefore its aversion to exchange the known for the unknown. But Christian faith will overcome this aversion, for it accepts the information which God's word gives, and especially does it see a reason for overcoming its natural aversion to dying in the blessed truth that the hands of a heavenly Father are ready to receive the departing spirit.

Lastly. Let us learn from the words of Jesus to put our trust and hope in God, in the view of devout, suitable and proper language. All earnest and anxious souls who know their spiritual needs will give expression to their wishes and desires in suitable language. The words may not be many, nor very elegant or polished, but will be such as common sense and a solemn serious soul will dictate. The Publican's prayer was not in many words, but he went down into his house justified rather than the polished Pharisee. The thief on the cross did not use many words, but words he did use, and words which were suitable and which secured for him a favorable answer. "Lord," he said, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and Jesus said unto him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

III. IT REMAINS FOR ME FURTHER TO ADD,

that as we know that many die suddenly, without any opportunity to commend their spirits into the hands of

God at the moment of death, and as we do not know in what circumstances or under what conditions our own death may take place, we ought to be dying daily and daily committing our spirits into the hands of our heavenly Father. I have no doubt that this was, at least partly, what Paul meant when he said, "I die daily."

My brethren, be dying daily. Let the thought of death be familiar to you. It is not at all the depressing, disheartening, gloomy thought which some take it to be. To the true intelligent believer it is a cheering happy thought. And if there are true Christians who shrink from the thought of death, the reason must be that they are not intelligent Christians. Men may be true believers without being intelligent believers. My brethren, seek to grow, not only in grace, but also in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Seek not only to be true believers, but also intelligent believers. And if you have the intelligence which it is possible for you to attain to, the thought of death will not be to you a gloomy, dark, disheartening thought.

To the heir who is yet a minor, is the thought of reaching maturity, gloomy and depressing? Surely not. But he longs for it, and counts the days and the months till the inheritance which is now managed by trustees and executors and administrators, comes into his own hands.

To the traveller who is wandering in an alien country, in a strange land, is the thought of accomplishing his journey and reaching his own home and his own

friends gloomy and depressing? Ah no! He thinks of the day and the hour and this thought gives him no sorrow.

To the scholar or student, who is still under teachers and governors, and who has to go through extensive reading and close and testing examinations, is the thought of finishing his course, passing his last examination and getting his license or diploma, gloomy and depressing? Surely not. This is the day he longs for. He is pressing forward to this end, and he will be glad at the near prospect of its arrival.

And so it ought to be with the Christian. The day of his death is the day that will end his training and his disciplining, and his trials and his journeying, and his minority. The day when he shall get the inheritance and the crown, the full freedom of the sons of God.

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PART II.

SELECTED SERMONS.

SELECTED SERMONS.

DISCOURSE I.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

Luke x. 42: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

IN connection with many things that pertain to this present life and to the temporal affairs of men, the importance of *one thing* may be very great. One thing may be so important that the lack or absence of it may render valueless the existence and presence of many other things. A watch, for instance, is useless for the end for which it was made if its main-spring is wanting or broken. In the words of an eminent master of illustrations: "Lacking its main-spring—which is but one thing—a watch with jewels, wheels, pinions, and beautiful mechanism, the finest watch indeed that was ever made, is of no more use than a stone." "What an unmanageable and useless thing were a ship without its rudder! Who

would commit himself to the bosom of the great deep in a ship without a rudder? It might be made of stout oak, and rigged with the greatest skill, and manned by faithful and able officers and an active crew, but without a rudder it would be an unwieldy mass on the surface of the sea, and the first gale would leave it a hopeless wreck upon some luckless shore. It is so also with man, as regards his spiritual relations and his prospects for the world to come. He may have many things that are in themselves, and for the present life, very useful; but there is one *needful thing* which, if he lacks, all his other possessions, attainments and excellencies will be of no avail for securing for him an entrance into the kingdom that is above.

And it is true that one may have many other excellent things, and yet be destitute of the one thing needful. A man may have riches—he may amass wealth, and be able to count his gold and silver by thousands, and yet lack the one thing needful. A **man may** have much learning—he may have read all the classics and he may have studied all the sciences; but, at the same time, he may be without possession of the one thing needful, and consequently destitute of a good hope for the world to come. Wealth, learning, civil promotion and honor, worldly glory, the respect of friends, beauty, bodily health and temporal power, will avail us nothing for the salvation of our souls, and for safety in the day of final account, if

we lack the good part which is above all others, the one thing needful. But this is not all: we may rise still to a higher platform, and assert, with perfect assurance, that a man may possess many natural and acquired moral excellencies, may even have religious anxiety, and a very fair religious exterior, and after all be destitute of the one thing needful. One may be amiable, honest in business, just in all his dealings with his fellow creatures, full of integrity in all his secular engagements and transactions, and yet lack the one thing needful. He may experience religious feelings, and be strict and punctilious in the performance of rites and in the celebration of ordinances, and yet lack the one thing needful.

These remarks may appear to some to be carried beyond due limits—to be unnecessarily severe. But are they so in reality? What can be easier than to draw a full substantiation of them from the Word of God? Call to mind the parable of the sower, and especially the seed among the thorns and on the stony ground. What an excellent character did the young nobleman that came to Jesus possess. He addressed Christ respectfully; he had kept all the commandments, according to his own showing; and he was so amiable that Jesus loved him, and yet he lacked one thing, and he went away sorrowful, and we never hear again a word about his conversion or salvation. How careful and strict in his religious observances was the Pharisee that went up with the Publican into the

temple to pray ; and yet the poor Publican went down into his house justified rather than he. And what excellent attainments do those make who will be able to say to Jesus at the last day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" but to whom he will profess, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." They had many excellent things about them, and they had made several notable attainments; but still they were workers of iniquity, and they lacked the one thing needful, the good part which alone would have served them a good purpose in that day.

And now, in attempting to open up the text, I shall pursue the following plan: First, explain the one thing needful; secondly, consider the one thing needful as an object of choice; and thirdly, consider the assurance that it will not be taken away from those who choose it. And may the blessed Spirit of God guide our meditations, that they may be in accordance with His own mind, and also for edification.

I.—WHAT IS THE ONE THING NEEDFUL?

We surely need have no hesitation in answering this question when we consider who the person was that uttered the words of my text, and the mission on which He came into this world. It was Jesus, the Son of God, that uttered these words, and the mission on which He came into this world was to destroy the

works of the devil, and to save from sin and ruin all that believe in Him. The one thing needful is the salvation which Jesus Christ has wrought out and which is made known in the Gospel; the one thing needful is an interest in His precious blood, His atoning sacrifice. For us, fallen, lost sinners transgressors of God's law, who for our transgressions are exposed to the displeasure and the wrath of God, the salvation which Christ has wrought out is the one thing needful. This is the one thing that is absolutely needful for us, without which we must for ever be wretched and lie down in sorrow where the worm never dieth and the fire is never quenched.

Other things may be useful, and it may be for our comfort here to have them, if we can obtain them without neglecting salvation; but no earthly thing is absolutely needful for us, and should never be sought nor held by us in a way that would endanger the salvation of our souls. Nay, more; life itself is not needful for us if we cannot preserve it without missing an interest in Jesus. It is better to lose even life, if need be, than miss the salvation of our souls. In other days, the devoted followers of Christ were exposed to the loss of all earthly things--yea, even to the loss of life itself; but they did not compromise their principles, they did not deny their Lord for the sake of escaping the dangers to which they were exposed; but they "took joyfully the spoiling of their

goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

Salvation is well called "the one thing needful," for the life of that man that does not secure it for himself is a failure, whatever success in other matters may attend his labors. We call men successful and fortunate when they rise to honor and power and riches here; but that alone is true success which includes amongst its achievements an interest in the death of Christ, and a title to eternal glory. Is the ambitious warrior who returns from the battle field, covered with military glory, a successful man? Is the politician successful who makes the halls of Legislation ring with plaudits at his sonorous eloquence and withering sarcasms, whereby he curbs and checks the aspirations of an ambitious opponent? Is the worldling successful who multiplies his profits by thousands, it may be on a traffic whose sad results for others are broken fortunes, desolated homes, and untimely graves? Is the man of science successful who pries into nature's deep recesses, investigates her laws, and makes discoveries which win for him the applause of men? Yes, call the lives of such men successes if you will, but remember that ultimately they may be miserable and total failures. That life—that career alone has been a success which ends in a hopeful death and a happy eternity. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

But the one thing needful is also called in my text, "the good part." "One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part." And who doubts that the Gospel salvation is a good part, a good lot, a good portion? Oh, how good it is! Just meditate on it a little, turn it over in your mind, that you may be impressed with an idea of its goodness, its excellency, its preciousness, its glory. What is salvation, the salvation which Jesus Christ bestows on His people? What does it mean? What does it include? What are its accompaniments? Why, salvation is the pardon of sin's guilt, and freedom from its controlling and corrupting power; it is an interest in God's favour, access into His presence, and joy in His mercy and love; it is deliverance from an accusing conscience, from the assaults of Satan, and from the seductions and allurements of the world; it is deliverance from hell and from the wrath that is to come, on the one hand, and admission into the incorruptible kingdom, and joy and happiness, unspeakable felicity and unclouded glory, in the society of God, Christ and angels, on the other hand. Salvation is surely a good part, a good thing, an excellent portion, a glorious inheritance. What part can be compared with it in excellence and preciousness?

Salvation is good in itself, all its elements are good, all its blessings are glorious. And it is also good by contrast with the part and portion of those to whom it does not belong, who neglect or reject it, and

who shall not therefore be permitted to taste of its joys or to experience its blessedness. Oh, how bad is the portion which is theirs! How sad is their state now, and how awful are the prospects that lie before them, beyond death and the grave and the day of final account! How unspeakably bad it is to continue forever an enemy of God, a victim of the devil, the subject of rebellious thoughts, foul lusts and hateful passions, and the object of God's overwhelming wrath and withering indignation! Hearer, which is your portion, the good part or the evil part? Before I pass on to the next head let me earnestly urge on you the question, which is your portion? Do you not know? Have you no anxiety about the matter? I beseech you, stir yourself up to thought and anxiety now. It is high time for you to be in earnest about this matter, if you have not been stirred up to earnestness hitherto.

II. CONSIDER THE ONE THING NEEDFUL AS AN OBJECT OF CHOICE: "One thing is needful, and Mary *hath chosen* that good part."

Jesus congratulates Mary on the choice which she had made. He commends her; he holds her up for an example to others. While he administers a gentle rebuke to Martha, he commends Mary. And it is not improbable that these words were the means of Martha's conversion; for the xi. chap. of John's Gospel seems to leave no room to doubt her conver-

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soin and her interest in Jesus. In the 5th verse of that chap. we read, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus."

Man is an intelligent and responsible being. He possesses understanding, conscience and will. By his understanding he acquires knowledge, by his conscience he discerns between right and wrong, and by his will he determines himself to action and he chooses and rejects. Now the Gospel comes to man and addresses him as a being possessed of such mental powers. It addresses his understanding, his conscience and his will; it appeals to his heart and affections; it deals with him as an intelligent and free agent. It tells him that he is a sinner, that he is a wrong-doer, a transgressor of God's law, a fallen and corrupted creature; and that consequently he is exposed to the righteous displeasure and the just wrath of God. It tells him that as a sinner he is under condemnation, and on the way to everlasting misery and ruin. But it tells him also that God, prompted by love and mercy, devised a plan for the salvation of sinners, a plan which, briefly explained, consists in sending His own Son into this world in human nature, to die for sinners, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but have everlasting life. The Gospel proclaims that Jesus has brought life and immortality to light; that He has atoned for sin by His death; that God is satisfied with his work on behalf of men, and ready to pardon all that believe in Him and accept

Him as their Saviour; and in view of all this, the Gospel calls on sinners to turn from sin, to believe in Jesus, to choose and not neglect the great salvation which He hath wrought out.

Such, then, is the nature of the proposal which the Word of God makes. It exhibits before men a great and precious object, and it asks, beseeches and commands them to look at it, to examine its properties and to choose it at once for their portion. God's message to men does not make on them the demand of turning away from the objects and interests which naturally, and in their state of sin, engage their attention, without setting before them something else more worthy of their esteem. The constitution of the human mind does not furnish any ground for supposing that such a demand would ever engage the serious attention of men for any considerable length of time. The mind must have an object on which to exercise its thoughts and set its affections. The flow of its thoughts and sentiments cannot be entirely brought to a stand still. If they flow not in the right channel, they will flow in a wrong one. Can you stop entirely the flow of a river which has its source in the snow-capped mountains? Raise your dam as high as you may, still the river rises also and overflows it. You may change the channel of it, but you cannot place an entire arrest on its flow; and no more can you stop entirely the flow of man's thoughts and affections. You may change the direction of them, and that is

what the Gospel aims at accomplishing. From the things of time and sense, from forbidden objects and sinful pleasures, they may be turned toward the good part which the Gospel exhibits. But to demand that men cease to love the world and the things that are therein, without setting some worthier object before them, were useless. Such a demand were indeed unnatural and unreasonable. The Gospel of Christ makes no such demand. On the contrary, while, on the one hand it depreciates earthly things as chief objects of men's pursuits, and condemns courses which men pursue for attaining them; on the other hand it exhibits a precious and glorious object, an object worthy of the attention and esteem of men; and it calls on them to renounce at once the world, the devil and the flesh, and to choose that precious object which will be a blessing for them even in this life, and make them unspeakably happy in the world that is to come. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.—How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.—Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.—This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.—How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

But what is the nature of this mental act by which men choose the one thing needful? How does the mind perform this act? Is it an act of the human mind in its natural state? Or is there any supernatural and divine agency involved in its production.

i. The act of the will by which a sinner chooses the one thing needful is the result of a supernatural and divine influence. There is a spiritual and divine agency involved in its production. It is the fruit of regeneration; nor can any man in his natural state, and destitute of the grace of God's Spirit, perform it. It is doubtless the act of the human mind itself—the result of the operation of the natural faculties and affections renewed, enlightened and influenced by the Spirit of God. There are no new faculties and affections given to regenerate sinners, but the faculties and affections which naturally belong to them—understanding, memory, imagination, conscience, will, fear, hope, love, desire, and so forth—are so renewed and influenced by the Holy Spirit that they become spiritual powers, because the Holy Spirit so communicates Himself to the subjects of His operations that He becomes in them the principle and the spring of a new religious and divine life.

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2. The act by which the sinner chooses the good part is the result of a complex process of experience, which for the purposes of instruction and edification, may be resolved into the following particulars:

First, there is in this experience a conviction of sin and of the need which the subject of it has of deliverance from its guilt and its polluting and corrupting power. This conviction comes from a spiritual enlightenment of the understanding and conscience, on the whole question of the extent and spirituality of the law of God, in its applications to the dispositions and affections of the individual's heart, as well as to his life and conduct. The law is holy and just and good; and when, by divine grace, a sinner is enlightened so as to perceive the holy, just and good character of the requirements of the law, sin appears to him exceedingly sinful; the godly sorrow of repentance is produced in him; he becomes convinced of his exposure to the punishment which sin deserves, and of the repugnance of sin to the holy nature and will of God, and he begins to inquire for a way of deliverance from sin and its fearful consequences.

Secondly, in the complex experience of a regenerate and gracious soul there is an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus to a perishing world, a discovery of the suitableness of the death and the whole mediation of Christ for satisfying the claims of divine justice and for securing for sinners forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God. Scripture passages

which speak of the excellency and sufficiency of Christ's mediation on behalf of sinners, come with new light and with convincing power to the mind. The light of truth shines from the Word of God without on the renewed mind within, in such a way that truths that were often read, or heard, or remembered before, without making any salutary impression on the soul, are now seen in a new and impressive light. From passages like the following the anxious soul becomes thoroughly convinced that salvation is in Christ; that God the Father is willing to save and does actually save all that believe in Jesus and love and obey Him; that whatever may become of himself some others are saved; and that Christ is able and willing to save him also, if only he could come to Him aright, pray as he ought, and love and obey Him with his whole heart: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,—He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.—Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.—Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.—The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.—He that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Thirdly, there is in the complex gracious experience which we are considering, a drawing out of the

affections and the desires toward God, and Christ, and spiritual things; the good part is seen to be a very desirable object; the renewed will is persuaded and enabled to choose it in preference to all rival things, and to embrace Jesus Christ, through whom it is offered, and in whom it is to be found. A process of reasoning like the following is more or less distinctly developed in the consciousness of the anxious one: "If whosoever believeth in Christ hath life, why may not I have it? If Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, why may not I answer his call? I am a sinner. If whosoever will may take of the water of life freely, why may I not take it? I need it; I will take it. The blessed Jesus will be my Saviour; I will go to Him as I am; I will rest on Him for salvation; and I will endeavor to follow Him through good report and evil report." Earthly things are now seen in their true colors, and as insignificant and even trifling in comparison with spiritual and eternal things. The grace-conquered soul gazes and meditates in rapt attention, and becomes, it may be to a great extent, oblivious and forgetful of surrounding things. The light of truth is in his eye; divine and spiritual things are high in his estimation; peace from God quiets his agitated feelings; and hope and joy spring up within him in place of sorrow and despair.

Choosing the one thing needful is therefore an intelligent and rational act of the human will renewed by grace. It is an act of which its subject must be

conscious, and which will be accompanied with symptoms and evidences of its nature and existence. Jesus said, "Mary hath chosen that good part." Of course He knew what was in her better than she did herself. He was omniscient—His knowledge of her thoughts, feelings and volitions was complete and perfect. But who will venture to assert that she had not then, herself, a consciousness that earnest thoughts, fervent feelings, keen desires, deep love and confident trusting, mingled and burned within her bosom. Nay more, were there not then about Mary plain signs and evidences of the anxious and earnest state of her soul, which even any other thoughtful and intelligent spectator might be able to perceive? It must have been quite discernible that she was not a careless hearer. Imagine you see her, sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening with devout attention to His blessed words. She was sitting at His feet, that is, she assumed the attitude of a learner. Her ears received the blessed words, and her soul drank in the heavenly doctrines, as the languishing flowers drink in the grateful rain. Anxious fear, and tremulous hope, and refreshing joy would chase each other in her agitated heart, as the blessed news was communicated to her that there was forgiveness with God—that her soul might be saved—that she and all who accept God's terms of peace, and comply with His gracious invitation, should have peace and acceptance with Him. And do we not know, from her subsequent history, that she had not

been a forgetful hearer, that a lasting impression had been made on her heart, an impression which controlled her emotions and feelings and regulated her life. Christ had taken possession of her heart and ever afterwards she sought to honor and to please Him, "It was this Mary that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair." And when her brother Lazarus was sick, she, with her sister Martha, sent an anxious message to Jesus.

And now, hearer, I ask you, have you chosen that good part, the one thing needful? You have often heard of it; the message which reveals it has often been proclaimed in your hearing. I suppose that this is not the first time you have heard of it or read about it. Have you chosen it for your portion? In the first place, have you deliberated on this matter? Have you had an anxiety about it? What testimony would your own consciousness bear? In the second place, are there signs and indications of true discipleship about you? Are there evidences in your life and conduct that you are a follower of Jesus? Jesus is not here in bodily presence. You cannot therefore show your love to Him and your appreciation of the good part which He has procured for sinners, exactly in the same way in which Mary did. But you have the word of Christ; do you read it and study it? You have the commandments of Christ; do you keep them? You have the ordinances of Christ; do you prize them highly? and do you diligently observe them? You have the cause

of Christ ; do you support it ? You have the people of Christ round about you ; do you seek them out ? and do you hold Christian fellowship and communion with them for your mutual edification ?

Alas ! there are many that have never chosen the good part. Some simply neglect it, give themselves no concern about it, thoughtlessly disregard it. Towards their fellow-creatures their conduct is irreproachable ; they behave themselves respectably ; they are not guilty of heinous sins or aggravated transgressions. But they lack piety toward God ; they are thoughtless and indifferent about spiritual and eternal things. Others deliberately reject the good part, and follow the world, the devil and the flesh. They had anxieties about their souls' interests, but bad habits which they had contracted, and strong lusts which they have repeatedly indulged, have gained the mastery over them. They saw plainly that those habits and lusts must be given up and mortified, or religion renounced ; they saw that such repugnant things could not be held together. It may be that they had experienced a struggle, but finally the result has been the deliberate rejection of Christ and the offer of salvation. Others again strive to secure the good part while they follow sinful courses, respecting which the Bible declares that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. There are various ways by which men may go to perdition, but there is only one way by which heaven may be reached. Oh, how anxious should men be

lest they miss this blessed way that leads to God and glory. Hearer, if you have not yet begun to travel in the way of life, begin now; if you have not yet chosen the good part, choose it now. Too long you have neglected or rejected the one thing needful, do so no longer. It is in your offer. Christ says, "Come unto Me and live, Look unto Me and be saved." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

III. CONSIDER THE ASSURANCE THAT THE GOOD PART SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THOSE WHO CHOOSE IT: "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

It is plain that Christ's words amount to an assurance that the good part should not be taken away from Mary. These words amount to a positive assertion or prediction of Mary's everlasting possession of the good part, of Mary's sure and certain final salvation. From the lips of Jesus, I suppose that no one would think of taking them for anything short of that meaning.

But in order to Mary's everlasting enjoyment of the one thing needful, it was necessary for her to persevere in grace and holiness to the day of her death, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Therefore Christ's words imply a promise of Mary's perse-

verance in grace and holiness. Christ assures to her the inalienable possession of the good part, and this promise He will make good in His own way by preserving her from totally and finally falling away from faith and Gospel obedience. His words are equivalent to a particular and personal application to the case of Mary, of the words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 27, 29.)

Doubtless it must be difficult for those who hold that "true believers and regenerate persons may not only fall from justifying faith, and in like manner from grace and salvation, totally and finally, but likewise that in fact they not seldom do fall from it and perish eternally," to bring this passage into harmony with their creed. I imagine that if any zealous advocate of that doctrine were present when Jesus uttered the words of my text, he might feel a little uneasy and be ready to suggest to the Divine speaker a modification of His assertion. Possibly he would suggest, "Peradventure she shall fall from grace, and what then? it must be taken away from her. Express it conditionally, put an 'if' in it; say, it shall not be taken from her if she persevere, if she do not fall from constancy in faith and obedience. To give her such an assurance

as your words express, may make her careless and militate against her growth in grace and her sanctification. It were better to keep her in doubt and fear ; she would then be more careful to maintain good works." But the Lord Jesus does not express conditions or entertain any doubts at all. He puts no "if" nor condition in His assertion, but says, without qualification, "It shall not be taken away from her."

But, perhaps, the opponents of the doctrine of the saints' perseverance would be willing to admit that this was a particular instance of assurance of perseverance and ultimate salvation bestowed on Mary by a special revelation, but contend that it were quite illogical to infer a general doctrine from a particular case or a number of particular and individual cases. They will not deny, I suppose, that individuals may be assured of their future perseverance by a special revelation, and they will admit Mary's case to be an instance of such assurance by a special revelation, but they will ask with an air of triumph, "Does this single case, or does a number of single and separate cases, warrant the general doctrine of the assurance that the good part shall not be taken away from those, from any of those, who choose it?"

Now, we must be ready to admit that a particular case does not warrant a general or universal conclusion. If there were no general statements respecting the doctrine of perseverance and of the assurance of final salvation to every one that once truly and believ-

ingly chooses it for his portion, it would be precarious for us to argue it from a particular case like the one now before us. But does not the particular naturally and logically suggest to us the general, when we know that we can turn upon it the stream of light which passages like the following give:—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?—For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.—Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.—You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.—For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance;"—and along with these passages I should not fail to mention John x. 27-29, which has already been quoted in this discourse.

Christian professor, if you are only a hypocrite, a professor having a name to live, but in reality dead in trespasses and sins, there is every likelihood that instead of drawing comfort and encouragement from the doctrine under consideration, you will suck from it only poison for the ruin of your own soul. If, from this doctrine, you take to yourself license and warrant to live in sin, you only show that you have not received the seed of the kingdom into a good and honest heart. If we cast pearls before swine, we need not be sur-

prised if they trample them under their feet. Neither must we wonder if professors that have the name, but deny the power of Godliness, abuse the doctrine of the saints' perseverance and final salvation. But shall we deprive the children of God of the comfort and encouragement which this doctrine is fit to yield because hypocrites abuse it? What doctrine will not hypocrites abuse? Yea, the whole word of God is a savour of death unto death to them, but it is the savour of life unto life for true believers.

If, therefore, Christian professor, you are a true believer, if you have in truth chosen the good part, the doctrine of assurance that it will never be taken from such as you are, is fit to yield for you solid comfort and great encouragement amidst the troubles and afflictions with which you may be surrounded in the conflict which you have to sustain with sin and Satan. This doctrine is fit to draw out your heart in faith and love towards God the Father, and towards Jesus Christ the Saviour, for it shows you that redeeming love is so constant and unchangeable that the failings and shortcomings of His people do not provoke God to cast them off in His displeasure—that God is patient, and long-suffering, and ready to forgive; and that when you have been overtaken in a fault, you may still go to Him to the throne of grace, in contrition for your shortcomings, but in the confident hope that He will wash your sins away. In your efforts to mortify the flesh and to gain a victory over Satan, how

comforting and encouraging is it for you to know that He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it—that while you endeavour to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure; that you may be confident that God will shortly bruise Satan under your feet, and that you will come off a conqueror—yea, more than a conqueror, through Him that hath loved you. Are you beset with troubles, bereavements and trials of this life? then this doctrine is fit to sustain your spirit and to increase your Christian fortitude, for it reminds you that trials are no proof of your being forsaken by God. Such trials have been experienced by His people in all ages, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Meditate, therefore, on the assurance that the good part will not be taken away from those that choose it. See how it reflects the stability of God's love; the steadfastness of His gracious purposes; the faithfulness of His blessed promises; the merits of Christ's death, and the prevalence of His intercession. It is enlarged and impressive views of these great and important subjects that will stir you up to diligence and steadfastness in the ways of God, and not slavish fears of hell, and of the danger of your falling from

grace and salvation after all that you have felt and done. It is through the Spirit of God that you can mortify the deeds of the body, and by the cross of Christ that you can crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Then press on, in firm faith and with unfaltering steps. Keep Jesus in your heart and heaven in your eye; be cheerful, hopeful and happy; and in due time you will pass away from this scene of conflict to a world of unmixed happiness. And, meantime, looking up, by faith, to your exalted Redeemer, address Him, affectionately and confidentially, in words like the following:

“O holy Saviour, Friend unseen,
Since on thine arm Thou bidst me lean,
Help me, throughout life’s varying scene,
By faith to cling to Thee.

“Though faith and hope may oft be tried,
I ask not, need not aught beside;
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The souls that cling to Thee.

“They fear not Satan nor the grave,
They feel Thee near and strong to save;
Nor dread to cross e’en Jordan’s wave,
Because they cling to Thee.”

DISCOURSE II.

OUR SINS LAID ON JESUS.

"All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii : 6.

Ps. c : 1 ; Ps. xcv : 6-8 ; Ps. cxix : 173.

I AM glad to see so many present here this morning to listen to the gospel preached. I trust I shall be able to say something that will help you to grow in seriousness and piety. I trust, too, that you came here this morning wishing to be spiritually benefited by the services of the day. Did you pray before you came here, that God may help me to preach so that you may be powerfully impressed with the truth?

I have very important topics to discuss in your hearing to-day ; I hope you will give earnest heed to them. There are a great many in this wicked world that are quite careless and indifferent about the great subjects of our religious faith. My brethren, I counsel you not to be like such people. In the kind providence of God we have been highly favored with facilities for acquiring an extensive and sound knowledge of the scriptures. We have been born and brought up where the light of the gospel shines. Great will be our condemnation if we choose darkness rather

than light. For my own part I am resolved to choose and follow the light. And I counsel you to do the same. O, choose the light of the glorious gospel. Let the word of God be a lamp to your feet and a light to your paths in the journey of life.

How glad should we be that we have this blessed light, that we have not been left in heathen darkness. Alas for those who have no knowledge of the Bible! There are multitudes following the delusions of the false prophet Mahommed, or bowing in debasing idolatry at the shrines of false gods. Do you not pity those who bow down to wood, and stone, and clay, and metal shaped into the image of a man or beast? Do you not pity those who lacerate and maim their bodies, or in other ways degrade them, in the service of an idol which, in shape, is a caricature of a man or a beast, and which has neither breath, nor life, nor motion? Well, then, if you pity them, beware, I beseech you, lest you share a fate no better, if not worse than theirs.

But that believers may rejoice in their deliverance from sin and woe, and that unbelievers may see the way of salvation, let me get at the text without further delay. It is not long, but it is weighty. It is short, but it is comprehensive. It embodies the confession which the Holy Spirit draws from believing and regenerate souls. These words suit the lips of believers when they meditate upon the ruin which they have brought upon themselves, and upon the ransom which

God Himself has found for them. The words of my text are very appropriate in the hearts and in the lips of believers when they hold their high religious festival,—when they keep the blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper as we are about to do here to-day: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

We have in these words what the students of rhetoric call a parallelism or antithesis, two things contrasted that one or both of them may be seen more clearly than either of them could be seen were it presented alone and out of the contrast. The two things that are here contrasted are: what we have done on the one hand and, what the Lord has done on the other. I shall therefore, in dependence upon the blessing and aid of the Holy Spirit, speak of the two terms of this antithesis in the order in which they lie in the text, and afterwards I shall endeavor to show how we are benefited by what the Lord has graciously done for us.

I. CONSIDER WHAT WE HAVE DONE

according to the confession contained in this text, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

Sheep formed a very important part of the possessions of the Jews, and of the nations that were

round about them. Tending sheep was amongst them an honorable and profitable occupation. The shepherds were generally with their flocks night and day. They gathered them into folds by night and led them to the pasture grounds by day. And as they had often to seek for pasturage away from the villages, on the mountains and in the deserts, they were exposed to attacks from wild beasts and from thieves and robbers. Hence the shepherds were often under necessity to fight hard for the safety of their flocks.

But frequently a great deal of annoyance and trouble to the shepherds, and of danger to the sheep themselves, arose from the straying and wandering propensities of some of the latter. Dr. Thompson, in "The Land and the Book," gives a very interesting account of the life of the shepherd and the habits of the sheep as he witnessed them while he was a missionary in Syria. Speaking of the variety of character among the sheep, he says: "Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name to which it answers playfully, and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such choice portions which he gathers for that purpose. These are the contented and happy ones. They are in no danger of getting lost or into mischief, nor do wild beasts come near them. The great body, however, are mere worldlings, intent upon their own pleasure or selfish interests. They run from bush to bush, searching for variety or delicacies, and only now and

then lift their heads to see where the shepherd is, or rather where the general flock is, lest they get so far away as to occasion remark in their little community, or rebuke from their keeper. Others, again, are restless and discontented, jumping into everybody's field, climbing into bushes and even into leaning trees, whence they often fall and break their limbs. These cost the good shepherd incessant trouble. Then there are others incurably reckless, who stray far away and are often utterly lost. I have repeatedly seen a silly goat or sheep running hither and thither, and bleating piteously after the lost flock, only to call forth from their dens the beasts of prey, or to bring up the lurking thief who quickly quiets its cries in death."

Now you may notice that from this shepherd life and from the sheep, the sacred penmen have borrowed some of their most appropriate figures and images to illustrate spiritual things. In our own wanderings from God, as poor fallen sinners, we are like straying sheep. We have wandered from the fold and the flock of the Great Shepherd; we have travelled foot-sore and weary in devious paths; we have gone each into his own foolish and rebellious way. We are, therefore, by reason of our wanderings, exposed to great dangers; pitfalls and precipices are in our paths; the wild beasts of darkness, the devil and his angels, are ready to devour us; the shades of night are settling down upon us, and unless timely deliverance from our perilous condition come to us from some quarter, we shall be for ever undone.

But I must lay out my thoughts on this important topic a little more orderly. My remarks on our sad wandering, in the following order, may be more easily understood and remembered.

First By our straying we have forsaken the best and kindest friend, and the richest and most pleasant enjoyments, and we have taken up with a cruel and treacherous foe and become liable to misery, wretchedness and want. We have forsaken God, we have left the society of the holy, we have abandoned the sources of pleasure and felicity which are open to those whom God blesses, and who do not forsake Him. And, instead of God for our portion, we have now in our straying and wandering condition no portion but the miseries of this life,—diseases, losses, bereavements, fears, terrors, alarms, remorse of conscience, the prospects of death and the terrors that shall never end.

Again, By our straying we have violated the holy law and the good commandments of our God. Like sheep we have wandered, we have gone astray; but unlike sheep, we are sinful in our wandering. We have gone astray by disobedience, we are guilty, we are wicked. We have violated law and dishonored justice, and consequently law and justice have turned against us. We have brought down the curse of God's law upon our devoted heads. This is the reason why our straying has entailed such great evils upon us. We are exposed to dangers and miseries because we have sinned. Dangers, fears, miseries are inseparably

connected with sin. Except by getting rid of sin we can never get rid of dangers and miseries. Alas! when we look at our condition we have great reason to deplore it, great reason to lament as in dust and ashes.

Thirdly. By our straying we have corrupted and polluted our own nature. Not only are we exposed to the curse of the law, we are also vile and polluted. We are not only guilty in the sight of God, but also odious and filthy. We ourselves are vile and our righteousness is as a filthy rag before God. Spiritual rottenness has entered our souls, and hence come vile thoughts, fleshly lusts, murders, thefts, adulteries, blasphemies. As a corrupt tree bringeth forth corrupt fruit, so we bring forth evil fruit because we ourselves have become evil. We have fallen from our high original; the gold in us has become tin, and the most fine gold has changed.

Further. By our straying we have become selfish. "We have turned every one to his own way." Sin has not only separated man from God, it has also thrown elements of evil amongst men that alienate their affections from one another, that distract and tear to pieces and set in opposition to one another the members of the human family. It is hence that we have wars and rebellions, quarrels and animosities, hatred and enmity. And never will this world get rid of its sore evils, till the power of the gospel, by which men are brought back from their straying and wandering, goes forth to every land, to change the

hearts and to reform the lives of the people in all ranks and conditions of men. And O may that happy day be hastened, when the banner of the gospel shall be unfurled and wave to and fro in the sight of all nations, from the rising of the sun to its going down.

And still further, By our straying we have lost all claim upon God's goodness ; we have no more right to His bounty ; we have no more claim upon His love ; we have entirely forfeited our interest in Him. And if God does or has done anything for us in our fallen state, as indeed He has, as I shall by-and-bye shew you, it must have arisen altogether from His compassion, from His unmerited love, from the simple pleasure of His will. By nature we are now the children of wrath, and not the rightful sons and heirs of God. Upon no principle of law or justice may we now look, on the ground of our own nature or practice, for any thing at God's hand but wrath and displeasure, yea, a fiery indignation to devour us as adversaries.

Such, then, is a glance at the one side of the antithesis which my text contains; we must now look at the other side of it. We have seen the first member of the contrast, we have seen what we have done ; we have gone astray, we have sinned, we have disobeyed. We shall now look at the second member of the contrast, and we shall find that it is a great and wonderful contrast.

II. CONSIDER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

This is the second member of the contrast, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

First, Who is He on whom our iniquities have been laid? It is certainly none other than the Lord Jesus, the only begotten and well beloved Son of God. I need not occupy much time in attempting to show that those who understand the prophecy contained in this chapter, as referring to the Lord Jesus, have the correct view of it. The Holy Spirit has Himself put this beyond a doubt, for under His inspiration quotations are made in the New Testament from this chapter and applied to Jesus. This is the very chapter which the eunuch was reading when Philip drew near to his chariot and asked him "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and

preached unto him Jesus." Now the verses which are here quoted are the verses which immediately follow my text, and consequently we are taught by the inspiration of the New Testament to apply this passage to Jesus.

It was, therefore, on His own Son, the Son of His love, that the Lord laid the iniquities of us all. O wonder of wonders ! What a theme for the tongue of man or angel ! Had I splendid talents, I should find employment for them here. The poor creature, man, has gone astray like a lost sheep ; he has violated God's law ; he has committed great iniquities ; but God has laid on His own beloved Son man's iniquities. Had he laid them upon an angel, a holy being who from his creation had never gone astray from the paths of obedience and holiness, it were a wonderful thing. But it appears that no created being could bear them, that no created being could make an atonement for sin. Created powers, finite faculties, limited strength could not bear the iniquities of men. But Jesus could bear them, because he was God, equal with the Father Himself in honor, glory and power.

Jesus was the Father's beloved Son, the companion of His bosom from all eternity. They dearly and tenderly loved each other ; their mutual delight and enjoyment were deeply exquisite according to the lofty excellencies of their nature. But when Deity conceived the great thought of saving fallen sinners of mankind, the Father resolved to give up His own Son

and spare Him not, that He might work out salvation for man; and in carrying out His blessed resolution He sent Him forth in the fulness of time. And if you ask, What was it that prompted Him? I answer, His matchless, His unparalleled love to sinners. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John iii: 16.) "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love to usward, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v: 7.) Well may we exclaim in the words of the paraphrase:

Let Christian faith and love dispel
The fears of guilt and woe,
The Lord Almighty is our friend,
And who can prove a foe?

He who his Son, most dear and loved,
Gave up for us to die;
Shall He not all things freely give,
That goodness can supply?

Behold the best, the greatest gift
Of everlasting love,
Behold the pledge of peace below,
And perfect bliss above.

Secondly. Consider the import of laying all our iniquities upon Jesus. There must be a depth of meaning in the expression "hath laid on him the in

iquity of us all," which cannot be seen at a superficial glance.

First, In this act of God there was an imputation of our iniquity to the Lord Jesus. Jehovah transferred the guilt of his people from them to their substitute; He reckoned their sins to Him with a view to His being treated as they deserved to be treated. The guilt of His people or their liability to punishment was laid upon the Redeemer. In His Father's sight He was accounted as a sinner, that they might, for His sake, be accounted as righteous. "For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. v: 21.) He did not infuse sin into Him in such a sense as that He Himself should become a sinner, but the guilt of it was laid upon Him as a load which He had to bear. The load was not His but ours, but the Father laid it upon Him that it might cease to crush and overwhelm as many as believe in Him and rely upon Him for salvation.

Secondly, When our iniquity was laid on Jesus the curse of the law fell upon Him. There is not, indeed, any very great distinction between this remark and the first, but it is a different aspect in which we may contemplate the position in which our great substitute was placed, when our iniquity was laid upon Him. The curse of the law hung over us; we were under the curse, but the curse was transferred from us and laid upon Jesus. He was in fact, made a curse, reckoned

as an accursed thing, and treated also as such. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii: 13.) O what a strange thing was this! He who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, was made a curse in order that we, poor accursed things, might be redeemed from the curse of the law.

Thirdly. When our iniquity was laid on Jesus He became exposed to assaults from the devil and from wicked and ungodly men; and sorely did they set on Him. The narrative of His trials is known to you all. I shall only remind you of what you yourselves already know. Jesus found enemies enough when the sins of His people were laid upon Him. Hell opened its mouth and disgorged a host of foul spirits, who rushed upon Him with demon malice and power. And as for the treatment which He received at the hands of men, I shall only remind you of the buffeting and the spitting, the crown of thorns and the scarlet robe, the ignominious cross and the lacerating nails. A host of foes assailed our blessed Friend, but He vanquished them all. Paul tells us that He "spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly in his cross." (Col. ii: 15.)

Fourthly. When our iniquity was laid on Jesus, the Father awaked the sword of justice against Him and withdrew from Him for a season the light of His own benign countenance. And these circumstances were

the most awful elements which were in His bitter cup. He could meet men and devils and fight against them, without any fear of being discomfited by them ; but the desertion by the Father overwhelmed His soul, and broke His heart, and wrung from Him the heartrending cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Oh, who can fully fathom the meaning of these words as they proceeded from the lips of our Immanuel ! What could they mean ? Was there even a momentary tearing asunder of the persons of the God-head ? O my soul, pry not into this dreadful mystery too curiously ! Gaze and wonder, and be satisfied with conceiving that there was here something inscrutably and incomprehensibly awful ; it was something at which you may gaze with wonder and amazement, but which you may not expect to be able fully to fathom.

III. SUCH THEN, IS A VIEW, AN IMPERFECT VIEW

of what the Lord has done. It contrasts strongly with what we poor wretched sinners have done. But let us now, in the third place, consider what benefits we derive from it and in what way we do actually become partakers of this great benefit. But I must be short here. I cannot enter very fully into these very interesting topics. I speak on behalf of those who are actually partakers of the benefits that accrue to sinners from God's great and gracious doings.

First. As to the benefits, they are neither few

nor small, they are many and glorious. They are for-giveness of sin, peace with God, deliverance from the curse of His law, and from the prospect of the wrath to come, adoption into God's family, an interest in His favor, heirship with Christ Jesus, the promise of deliverance from corruption, from the snares of life and from the power of Satan, and a title to the inheritance that is undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ; in short, reclamation from our strayings and wanderings and deliverance from our iniquity and from all its fearful consequences.

Such is a short sketch of the blessings that accrue to God's people from the wonderful things which He has done. God has done a very wonderful thing, and very wonderful things result from it. The act and its consequences are all worthy of the Lord. He is great and glorious and He has done glorious things. When there was no eye to pity us, and no arm to bring us salvation, His own eye pitied and His own arm brought salvation unto His people, and He has said, " Deliver him from going down to the pit : I have found a ransom." (Job. xxxiii : 24.)

Second. And as to the way by which we actually become partakers of these blessings of which I have just been giving an imperfect sketch, it is faith. By faith in Jesus on whom our iniquity has been laid, we get rid of our iniquity and of all its terrible consequences. By faith we return from our straying ; by faith we rely on Jesus and become partakers of His

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grace ; by faith we become united to Him ; by faith we draw out of His fulness ; and by faith we become His sheep, and understand His voice, we get into the sheep fold and "go in and out and find pasture." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii : 36.)

O believer, let me therefore call upon you this day to rejoice in the salvation which Jesus has wrought out for you ! Come, celebrate the dying love of Jesus to-day. Remember thy Sin-bearer. Give yourself to Him anew. Resolve through His grace to turn from every wicked way, and to cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, with full purpose of heart and endeavor after new obedience. And,

IN CONCLUSION,

if there is any poor sinner here to-day that is anxious about his soul's salvation, let him believe in Jesus. Put his trust in Him on whom the Lord has laid our iniquity. Jesus invites you, O sinner. The Lord invites you. Come, confess thy sins and behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Confess thy sins and thine iniquity over the head of the Sacrifice, and you will get rid of all their burden. Jesus Christ our "passover is sacrificed for us"; He is the "propitiation for our sins"; He is our "Great High Priest," in things pertaining to God; "He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by Him." (I Cor. v : 7; I John ii : 2; Heb. vi : 25.)

DISCOURSE III.

THE ATONEMENT AND ITS RESULTS.

Is. liii : 10. " Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

Ps. cxviii : 24 ; Ps. xl : 5-8 ; Ps. exvi : 13. Par. xxv : 10, 11.

NO subject for meditation and reflection can be more marvellous and interesting than the sufferings and the death of Jesus Christ, God's Son ; and surely none can be more suitable for us in the circumstances in which we are now placed. The works of God in creation and providence round about are all marvellous and to be admired. But when we think of them in the light of His own nature and glorious attributes, our wonder and surprise will in a great measure cease. We say, To emanate from such a source, to be the product of such power and wisdom, what could they be but marvellous and amazing, inscrutable and incomprehensible. Granting that God exists, and that He is a Being of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, why should we greatly wonder when told that He made this earth and those heavens, and all things that are in them ? Only admit that God is infinite and

eternal in His Being and glorious attributes, and in Him you have a sufficient cause for creation and the course of providence. We can account for all marvellous things which we behold when we know that an Omnipotent and all-wise God rules the universe, for all those marvellous things are without Himself and they do not cause any heavy pressure on His nature.

But when we look at the sufferings and the death of Christ, and find that they are the sufferings of the Son of God, the sufferings and the death to which the Father gave up the Son to save sinners, the sufferings and the death which God endured in the person of His Son, for the salvation of guilty and rebellious creatures, how can we set bounds or limits to our amazement and surprise? Even when we are told that love to men prompted the Father to send the Son, and the Son submitted to suffering for the salvation of men, we have not reached the bottom of this mystery; for such love is amazing and unparalleled: it is measureless love, love that passeth knowledge.

Brethren, surely no subject could be more suitable for our meditations and reflections this morning, than the sufferings and the death of Jesus Christ, because we purpose before we separate to-day to partake of the symbols which have been appointed to commemorate those sufferings and that death. I have therefore chosen this text. It will lead us to meditation on the sufferings and the death of Christ, and on the great and important results of them.

That the text as well as the whole of the chapter from which it is taken, is a prophecy concerning Christ and the prosperity of His mediatorial kingdom, I may take for granted. I think I need not argue it at any considerable length. I suppose I sufficiently support this view and carry with me the conviction of my audience by citing one or two passages from the New Testament. Mark, in the narrative which he gives of Christ's crucifixion, says: "And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors." Now this prophecy which Mark quotes and applies to Jesus, is a part of the last verse of this 53rd chapter of Isaiah. And who is there that does not know the story of Philip and the eunuch, recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts. But the place of the scripture which the eunuch was reading when Philip drew near to the chariot, was a part of this same chapter, the 7th and 8th verses. "And Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus." (Acts viii : 35.)

Look we now directly at the text. It is divisible into two heads, namely the sufferings of Christ and the results of them.

I. CONSIDER THE SUFFERINGS

of Jesus Christ. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make

his soul an offering for sin." This is a prophecy of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

(a) The sufferings of Jesus Christ were very great sufferings and His death was a painful and ignominious death. The severity and the intensity of those sufferings cannot be grasped by the human mind ; none can form an adequate idea of them. But we may conceive of them in a way that will deeply affect and impress our minds. Consider the lowliness of His birth, the poverty of His condition, the contradiction, the reproach and the persecution which He endured, the power and malignity of His foes, the pains of His body, the agony of His mind, the ignominious and painful nature of His death, the agony in Gethsemane's garden, and the exclamation on the cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ! "— Consider these, I say, and you must have a very impressive and affecting view of the sufferings and the death of Christ.

(b) In some very impressive and important sense the Lord had a hand in the sufferings and the death of Christ. My text expresses this idea distinctly. " It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Lord, he, thou, signify the same person. Now I do not think that the sense of these expressions is fully brought out by saying that the Lord gave Him up and permitted men and devils to harass, contradict, slander, revile, oppose and persecute Him, and finally

with violent hands put Him to a cruel death. No, there is evidently more meant than permission by the Lord. The Lord bruised Him, put Him to grief, and made His soul an offering for sin. The Lord in some mysterious way had a hand in it. We have not reached the bottom of the bitter cup which He drank, when we say that men and devils assailed him. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he put him to grief, he made his soul an offering for sin." "He made him who knew no sin to be sin." The sword of justice was unsheathed and lifted up to smite this shepherd of the sheep. Into this mystery of suffering one may gaze, but he cannot comprehend it fully, nor adequately describe it.

(c) The sufferings and the death of Christ were an atonement or an offering for sin. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Why or how did pleasure or delight in any way enter into God's feelings in connection with this transaction? Because He loved men and sent His Son to save them. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." The love of God was in it. The love of God was the great moving cause in the redemption of men.

Men had fallen ; men had sinned ; men were lost. God pitied them, and wanted to save them. But an atonement was necessary, an offering for sin required to be made. God sent His own Son, laid on Him our iniquities, and made Him an offering for sin.

Do you ask, If God loved men why did He not save them without the costly sacrifice of His own Son's sufferings and death? I answer, God is holy and just; sin deserves punishment. God is the governor of the universe, and it behoved Him to maintain His dignity as governor, to exalt His law, and to make it honorable. And in order to satisfy His justice, to punish sin, and make His law honorable, he devised the plan of making His own Son an offering for sin. In Christ's cross therefore, we have a display of God's holiness and justice, His hatred to sin, His pity and love to man, and His willingness and readiness to save.

II. CONSIDER THE RESULTS

of the sufferings and the death of Christ. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." These words are a prediction of the happy results of the sufferings and the death of Christ. His seed are His people that serve Him, and that are God's children by regeneration. The prolonging of his days refers to His resurrection and ascension to heaven, where He now lives and carries on the administration of His mediatorial kingdom. And "the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand" signifies the success of His cause on the earth, by the preaching of His gospel, in the conversion of sinners, and in the growth of believers in grace and holiness unto salvation.

Brethren, these prophecies are now receiving their fulfilment. They have been developing into actual historical facts ever since the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. We ourselves are here to-day by virtue of the fulfilment of these predictions. We are here to preach the gospel, and to hear the gospel and to partake of the ordinances of God's house. We are here especially to-day to celebrate the ordinance which commemorates the sufferings and the death of Jesus Christ. In us Jesus sees His seed ; in our enjoyment of His ordinances and of His presence, He is prolonging His days, and in the conversion of sinners and in the building up of believers amongst us, the pleasure of the Lord is prospering in Christ's hands. In the spirit of these predictions, therefore, and in harmony with them let me say,

First, It is in harmony with God's purposes in the gospel, that we should realize to-day that we are the children whom God hath blessed. Brethren, do you repent of sin ? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ? then be assured that He hath given you power and privilege to be the children of God. You have been adopted into His family and you have a right to all the privileges of His children. Let your fellowship be with the Father and with the Son to-day, and also have delightful fellowship with one another.

Secondly, It is in harmony with God's purposes in the gospel, that you should have comfort from His word and ordinances, to support and encourage you

amidst the various sorrows, disappointments and trials of life. Are you Christ's, then all the promises of God are, yea and amen in Christ, for you. "All things are yours." All things will be made "to work together for your good"; even the sore chastisement which for the present is "not joyous but grievous, will yield for you the peaceable fruits of righteousness," the afflictions which are but for a moment will work out for you a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. (II Cor. iv : 17.)

Thirdly. It is in harmony with God's purposes in the gospel, that you should be furnished with the grace necessary to make you successful in the conflict with the world, the devil, and the flesh. Come, therefore, for that grace. Come boldly, come by faith and prayer. Lay aside every weight and run with patience the race set before you. Put on the armor, follow your Captain, be bold in the fight and success will crown your efforts.

Fourthly. It is in harmony with God's purposes in the gospel, that the careless should be awakened; the foolish made wise; the prisoners set free; sinners converted, and the unsaved regenerated and saved.

DISCOURSE IV.

CONVERSION AND EDIFICATION.

I Pet. i: 12 : "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; which things the angels desire to look into."

Ps. cxxi ; Ps. xxxvi ; Ps. cxxii.

THE two great objects of the preaching of the Gospel are, first, the conversion of sinners ; and secondly, the comforting, building up and nourishing of believers. Conversion : edification.

The second of these is the object aimed at by the apostle Peter in this epistle, and it is indeed the object in all the epistles which were written by the apostles.

And here is a lesson for the ministers of the gospel in every age ; let them not only labor for the conversion of the careless and the ungodly, but let them also labor and pray for the building up of believers in knowledge and holiness unto salvation. Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God unceasingly is, that you may be nourished up in the faith, comforted amid all the trials of life, sanctified and made meet for the kingdom which is undefiled and which fadeth never away, reserved in heaven for all true believers.

In these two verses which I have read for the foundation of my discourse to-day, we have the writer of the epistle, the persons to whom he directs it, and the salutation by which he opens it. These shall be the three heads of my discourse, on which severally we shall meditate, in dependence upon the blessing of the Spirit of the living God. O, we need His blessing. Brethren, I ask His blessing for you and for myself. I hope you do the same. Of what profit or avail can our meetings and services be without the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

I. THE WRITER OF THE EPISTLE.

He is designated by his name and his calling. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

First. His name, Peter. Originally his name was Simon, but the Lord changed it to Peter. (Matt. xvi: 18; John i: 42.)

Second. His calling; he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. Apostle signifies one sent, a messenger. The title is applied to the twelve whom Christ sent out to be witnesses of His resurrection, to preach the gospel, and to bear testimony that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.

The Church of Rome claims that Peter was the chief of the apostles, that he was the bishop of Rome, and that there has been an unbroken chain of succession from Peter to the present Pope of Rome. This is

an unfounded claim. That Peter was ever at Rome is doubtful, cannot be fully and satisfactorily established by history; and that Peter was the chief or Primate of all the apostles, cannot be proved either by history or scripture or both combined.

Peter simply calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ. He does not call himself chief apostle, nor does any other scripture writer accord to him such a title. He was an apostle like John and James and the rest of the twelve, and he has been guided by the Holy Spirit to write two beautiful and instructive epistles, for which we ought to be very thankful to God.

Brethren, I beseech you, study these beautiful epistles. Meditate upon them; pray over them; and ask the Holy Spirit to apply them with sanctifying power to your hearts and consciences.

II. THE PERSONS TO WHOM PETER,

apostle of Jesus Christ, directed or addressed this epistle: "The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocea, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This is the apostle's description of the persons to whom he addressed his epistle. And you will observe that it is divisible into two parts:

First, we have here their *temporal condition*;

they were strangers, scattered abroad through the countries that are mentioned. They were either children of the Jews that were in a state of dispersion throughout those countries who became believers when the gospel was preached to them, or believing Jews that were scattered abroad by the persecution that arose in Jerusalem.

About this, their temporal condition, I shall not say much more than that even strangers in a country without any settled homes, may be true believers in Jesus Christ and faithful followers of Him, and that in a certain sense all believers are strangers and pilgrims, who have here no continuing city, but seek one to come. Brethren, whether you are strangers or permanent residents in the place of your abode, O be not strangers to God and Christ and the throne of Grace ! If you are strangers, be travellers to the heavenly kingdom.

Secondly, Peter describes those to whom he addresses his epistle by their spiritual state: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Here you have their spiritual happy estate, and all the persons of the Godhead concurring in bringing them into that state.

(a) The Father elects. (b) The Spirit sanctifies and brings them to obedience. (c) And Jesus Christ by the sprinkling of His blood brings them into a state of justification and reconciliation.

(a) The Father elects. That He does so is manifestly the doctrine of the scriptures. That He did so from eternity, that He elected them in Christ Jesus before the world was, is a doctrine that can be established by scripture. Believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. And Paul tells us that those whom He foreknows, He predestinates, and those whom He predestinates, He also calls, justifies and glorifies. Here is a chain whose links cannot either be severed or broken. The two ends of it are in heaven and the middle of it bends down to earth, and if we are sure that we have the middle link of the chain—the effectual calling, then may we be assured that the other links are attached to this. My brethren, the practical and important question for us, therefore is, Have we been called, regenerated, converted, renewed, enlightened, enabled to believe and love and obey? Faith, love and obedience, these are the three great elements or fruits of God's calling. If we have these, then may we be assured for our comfort that we have been elected, that we are justified and that we shall be glorified. But I am partly anticipating what I have yet to say.

(b) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, shed His blood for the remission of sins. Without shedding of blood there is no remission, nor can there be any remission without the application of this blood to the conscience, by sprinkling. The sprinkling of that blood cleanses the sinner. This proclaims that sin is a defilement

and a guilt. The sinner is defiled ; he needs cleansing. The sinner is guilty ; he needs pardon. He is guilty, he deserves punishment, he deserves death. But Jesus has died. And whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

(c) The Spirit sanctifies. It begins in regeneration, in the great spiritual renewal by which the soul is enlightened, convinced of sin and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered unto us in the gospel. The end and proof of this sanctification is obedience. "Through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

In these few words we have the great scheme of redemption and salvation brought under our consideration. In it we see the three persons of the Godhead concurring : Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

First, O brethren, rejoice at this blessed revelation which God makes of Himself, and of His mercy and love to men. What if there had been no election at all, no shedding of blood, no grace nor work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and lives of men !

Second, Brethren, seek to have these blessings for yourselves. Seek them by study, and by faith, and by prayer. Make your calling and election sure. If you yield to the word and Spirit of God, if you turn from sin, if you repent and believe, and submit yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the calling, the effectual calling, and you have the election too, for that is what proves the election, and nothing else will. If you

have the calling that leads to obedience, be comforted and encouraged, you will by grace, be kept through faith unto salvation.

Third, If you have not been called and sanctified by the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, I beseech you take the matter into consideration at once. Repent and believe and turn to God now. You are invited. I invite, entreat, counsel you. But I must proceed.

III. WE HAVE HERE THE SALUTATION

by which Peter opens his epistle, "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied."

Grace and peace; two great blessings, and the measure in which he wishes the strangers to enjoy or realize them, "be multiplied," increased, enlarged, made very abundant.

First, Grace be multiplied unto you. And what can grace be but the favor of God? In the mouth of Peter, grace can mean nothing short of the favor and blessing of God. Grace to comfort, grace to strengthen, grace to establish, grace to elevate, grace in every time of need. Let such grace be multiplied.

Secondly, Peace be multiplied. And what can peace mean, but the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which keepeth the heart and mind through Jesus Christ.

And who can multiply grace and peace to God's

people but God Himself. This salutation of Peter is therefore, to all intents and purposes, a prayer. And it teaches us that good wishes, and Christian salutations, when properly understood, are prayers to God for His rich blessings.

Brethren, my wish and prayer is, that grace and peace be multiplied to you. And I trust that it is your wish and prayer for me. Blessed be God for the gospel. This is one of its precious privileges. May grace and peace be multiplied. Amen.

Mosa, Jan. 15th, 1881.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE V.

THE INHERITANCE OF BELIEVERS.

I Pet. i: 3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

THE whole of the contents of these verses may be divided under two heads. There is here, first, a joyous ascription of blessing to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, there is a reason given for this joyous ascription of blessing to Him; He hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance; He hath put in us a hope of a glorious inheritance.

To these two topics I shall direct your attention at this time, in dependence upon the blessing and aid of the Holy Spirit.

I. WE HAVE HERE A JOYOUS ASSCRIPTION

of blessing to God: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is doubtless the duty of creatures to adore their Creator. Especially is it the duty of saved, sinful

creatures to adore, and bless, and praise, and thank the merciful Creator who has had mercy upon them, and has saved them from sin and woe. It is a bad sign of one's spiritual state, to have no word of praise or blessing to say of God; while, on the other hand, it is a favorable symptom of spiritual health, for one to be found engaged in giving praise and thanks to God, and acknowledging Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(a) The only way in which we can bless God is by adoring Him, by acknowledging His goodness, and by thanking and praising Him. He can bless us by giving us what is needful and useful for us; we cannot bless Him by conferring any useful or needed favour upon Him, but by simply acknowledging His greatness and goodness, and by giving Him thanks for the blessings which we receive from Him.

(b) Blessing God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ implies faith in both and knowledge of both. For how can a man bless God unless he believes that "He is God, and that he is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek him?" and how can a man bless God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ without believing that Jesus is God's Son, and that He is His Anointed One to be the Saviour of sinners?

(c) Blessing God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ implies feelings of reverence, gratitude and joy. Adoration, praise and thanksgiving is the expressing of these feelings towards God. And these feelings

exist, and are expressed in adoration, because the soul is sensible that it has cause and reason for them all. And this leads me

II. TO CONSIDER THE REASON

which is given in my text for the joyous ascription of blessing to God. Here it is: "Which (who) according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Here we have the reason for blessing God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the two main ideas are a lively hope and an inheritance. As if he were to say, we now have a lively hope, we have now the prospect of a glorious inheritance, and He that hath wrought us into the self-same thing is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for this we call Him blessed; we rejoice in giving Him thanks and in ascribing praises to Him. A hope within us, and an inheritance the object of this hope, this is the complex reason for which we bless God. Brethren, to these let me now direct your attention,—the *hope* and the *inheritance*.

First. The hope for which the apostle blesses God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Here we have the divine origin of this hope, the evangelical ground on which it rests, and the distinguishing characteristics of it being a lively hope.

(a) The origin of the hope is the divine operation—regenerating and renewing the soul. God, saith he, hath "begotten us unto a lively hope." He has begotten us, He has wrought in us by His gracious power through his Holy Spirit indeed sent down from heaven. We need not be surprised at the scriptural doctrine, that God is the author and agent in the great spiritual change that must be produced on every soul of man before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Man is fallen, corrupt, dead, and although a message has come to him he cannot, of himself, savingly accept it. Nor should this discourage any person who feels his need of salvation, for the scriptures tell us that God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

God is the author of the Christian's hope—God begets Him unto a lively hope—and He does it according to His abundant mercy. Indeed, prompted by His own goodness, mercy, kindness, love, He begets a sinner unto a lively hope. Believer, this is the great incentive to move you to bless God, that He has begotten you, according to his mercy, unto a lively hope.

(b) But while God has a hand in producing the Christian's hope, the hope is the affection of the Chris-

tian's own mind. It is his own hope, raised in him by the truth of the gospel of the grace of God. It is raised in him in accordance with the reason, nature and constitution of mind which God has given him. God begets him unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the evangelical ground on which the hope rests. This is the truth on which the soul lays hold, and on which it builds its hope of heaven and happiness. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the great truth to which the apostles were to bear testimony. The resurrection is the proof that the death was an atoning sacrifice, and that the sacrifice was satisfactory. If Christ is not risen our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. "But now Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." (I Cor. xv : 20.) And faith in His resurrection implies faith in His sacrifice and in all His mediatorial work. And faith in His resurrection awakens hope of the resurrection of His people, and hope of the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, which He has prepared for His own. Such is the evangelical ground on which this hope rests.

(c) The distinguishing characteristic of this hope is, that it is lively. It is a lively hope, or a living hope, and this quality then distinguishes it from the common hopes of men, or the hopes of men whom God has not begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is a lively or living hope, for it has energy and endurance. It is well founded. It shall not be put to shame. It will not die. Even in death

itself it lives, and to the full fruition of its heavenly object—the inheritance. The hopes of men in earthly things, as they are excited by common reason and natural things, are often such as put to shame and die. And in regard to heavenly things, they all have a dying hope who have not been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. “The hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” (Job. viii: 13.)

Secondly. The object of the hope for which the apostle blesses God. He has begotten us, he says, unto “a lively hope, *to an inheritance.*” The begetting is to an inheritance, and the begetting is unto an hope of the inheritance. This is the complex reason of the blessing which he ascribes to God. God has given us a lively hope concerning or towards an inheritance.

Concerning this inheritance we have here four things: The nature of it; the scene or place of it; how the heirs are kept and made ready for it; and the time when they shall be put in possession of it.

(a) The nature of this inheritance is described in three particulars, “incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” And you will observe that all these particulars are described negatively. They tell us what this inheritance is not, they contrast it with inheritances on earth which are rendered unsatisfactory by the imperfections which are here negated.

This inheritance is *incorruptible*. Earthly inheritances are corruptible. They have elements of decay in themselves. But this inheritance is incorruptible.

It will not perish. It will not crumble into ruins, but shall endure forever.

"This inheritance is *undefiled*, clean, pure ; pure in its nature and pure in the principles by which it is acquired and held. He that obtained it was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But the inheritances of earth are in most cases, if not always, defiled by the deeds and doings of those that acquire them at first, or that enjoy them afterwards.

This inheritance shall *never fade away*. Time shall produce no damaging effect upon it. It is subject to no changes and vicissitudes. It is not a thing that grows, and comes to maturity, and then fadeth and passes away like the grass of the earth, and the flowers of the field, and the riches and the wealth of the men of the world. Such is its nature. Surely, it is desirable.

(b) The scene or *place* of this inheritance is heaven. It is reserved in heaven for you, saith Peter. Reserved in heaven. Heaven is the place or scene in which this inheritance is located. It is not on earth. Therefore the heirs have not full possession of it during their stay here. Here they are under humiliation and restriction. They are heirs "under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father."

But I must leave the rest till some other time.

First, Brethren, bless God for the lively hope of the inheritance ; you that believe.

Second, Aim at the inheritance ; seek to be heirs.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE JOY OF THE BRETHREN.

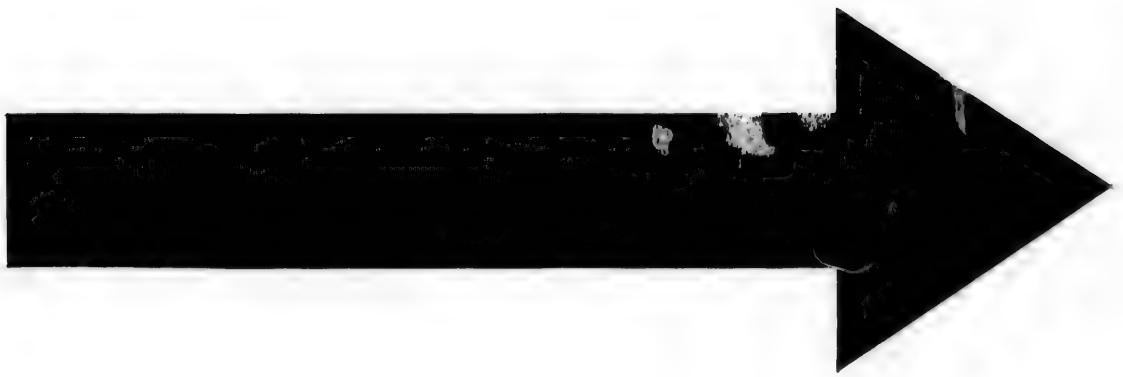
I Peter i: 6, 7: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of yonc faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

THE aim of the apostle is to increase the joy of his brethren, and this he seeks to do by two things: first, he exhibits the reasons for their rejoicing by sketching their privileges in Christ and the inheritance kept for them in heaven: see the verses immediately preceding my text. Second, he shows in my text that their afflictions and trials, though heavy and grievous, were only for a season, and were also needful and useful for the development and establishment of their faith. He seeks to fortify them as much as possible against the depressing influences of their trials, that their rejoicing might be enhanced.

In attempting to guide your meditations on the text we desire to do so in dependence upon the blessing and aid of the Holy Spirit.

I. FIRST, I OBSERVE THAT THE EXPERIENCE

of believers in this world is a mixed experience, an experience in which joy and sorrow are blended. There



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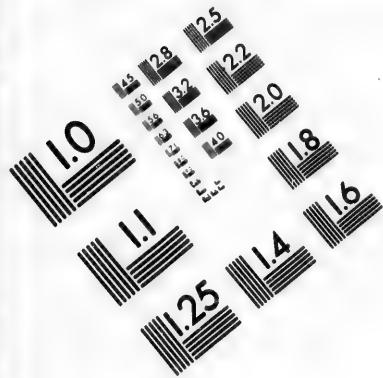
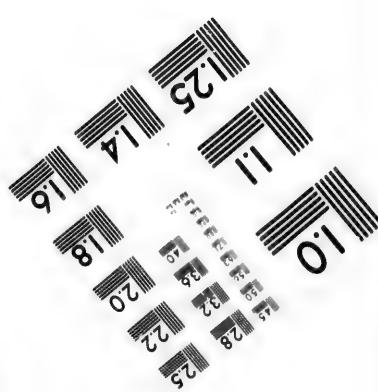
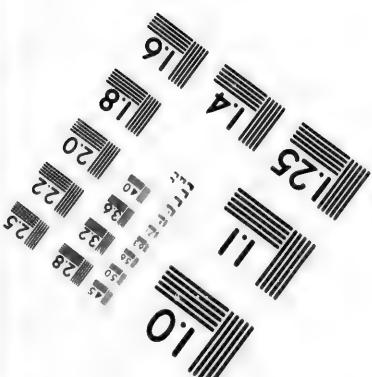
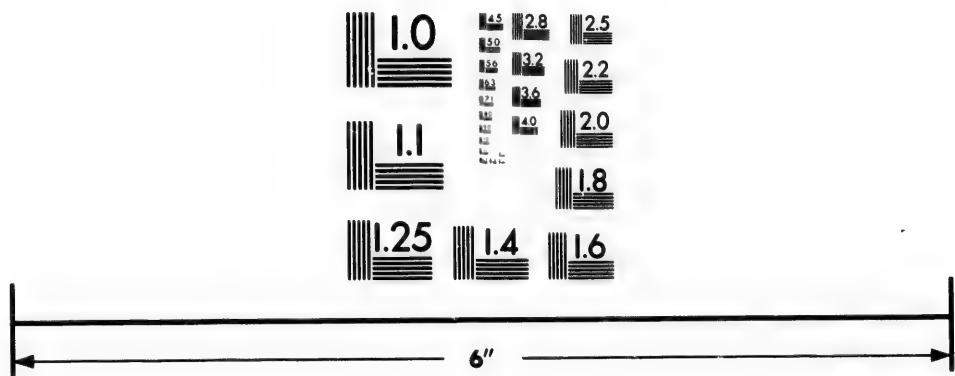
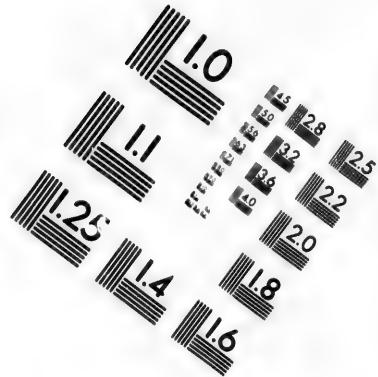


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is an inheritance kept in heaven for believers in which they shall have joy without sorrow, and pleasure without pain; but they cannot get possession of that inheritance until they leave this world and are carried up to glory.

“There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night
And pleasures banish pain.”

But in order to get into that land we must leave the land in which we now dwell. Here the experience of believers is like the fire which sends forth, not only flame, but also smoke. As the thistle or the thorn may be found by the side of the rose, so the bitter is found by the side of the sweet in the experience of believers.

(a) Believers do indeed rejoice, and they have great reason for rejoicing. They rejoice greatly, as my text says. Yes, some do attain to joy unspeakable and full of glory. And why should not believers rejoice, exult and rejoice with extreme joy? Look at their state. They are “begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” They are “renewed in the spirit of their minds,” they are “born again,” they are translated from darkness into God’s marvellous light. They have received the adoption of children, they are in God’s family and God is their Father, who will lead and guide and bless and save them.

Such is their state—and as to their prospects, they are great and glorious. The inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away is kept for them, and by and bye they shall be put in actual possession of it, to their unmixed happiness and their unfading joy. And surely these are rational, proper, sufficient grounds for rejoicing and exultation.

(b) But believers have sorrow here. Their lot is mixed; their joy has sorrow alongside of it or closely following it. They "are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Temptations, trials manifold and various come across their path, and throw them into great heaviness. The Christians of Peter's day had manifold temptations in their lot, and Christians in our own day have manifold temptations in their lot, although they may not be exactly the same as those which caused heaviness in the earlier ages. The temptations are manifold which come across the believer's path. Such as personal and relative affliction or sickness, accidents, disappointments, losses, bereavement. These temptations or trials are very often very distressing. They are highly fitted to wound and grieve man's heart and to make it heavy. Let no man think little of the temptations which come in the believer's way. They are neither few nor light considered in themselves, but then there are circumstances connected with them that ought to deaden their influence and to relieve greatly the hearts of believers from the heavi-

ness and the depression which they produce. And this leads me

II. TO OBSERVE THAT THE REJOICING

of believers should always predominate over the heaviness caused by the manifold temptations. The joy should predominate over the heaviness for two reasons.

First reason, the *causes of the rejoicing*. The reasons or it are great and glorious, as I have already endeavored to explain. The reasons for the rejoicing are, their spiritual state and condition, and the glorious future prospects.

Second reason, why the rejoicing of Christians should predominate over the heaviness is, that the manifold temptations which cause the heaviness have many mitigating circumstances connected with them.

The *first* circumstance connected with the temptations and trials of believers that should lighten the heaviness produced by them is, that they are of short duration. They last only for a little—only during the lifetime of believers here. They will soon pass away or we pass away and leave them. The temptations are only for a season, but the inheritance is incorruptible and fadeth not away. The trials come to an end in a short time, but the weight of glory is eternal. The heaviness produced by temptations only lasts for a season, but the weight of glory which they work for us will last for ever. And surely the consideration of this

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fact, should alleviate the distress produced on the mind of the Christian. It were a terrible thought, were these temptations to continue for ever ; but, no, blessed be God, they shall soon come to an end. Will not a man nerve himself up to bear the pain to be produced by the knife of the surgeon when he removes a tumor or amputates an incurable leg, that ease and comfort and health may be afterwards enjoyed during the rest of life ? And what comparison is there between the case of a man who endures the process of amputation that he may enjoy health for a few years afterwards, and the man who, for a few years endures temptations, yea manifold temptations, that he may have an eternity of joy and happiness afterwards ?

The *second* circumstance connected with the temptations of believers, that should lighten the heaviness produced by them is, that there is need for them ; in the economy of grace. There is a need for them, they are useful ; God turns them to account in connection with the sanctification of His people. My text says, " Though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." The phrase "if need be," might be translated, since there is need, or because there is need. And the whole change would then be, Though now for a season because there is need ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. And the next verse is an explanation of the need there is of the manifold temptations, " that the trial of your faith being much more precious than

of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found, etc. That is to say, there is need of the temptations to make a trial of your faith, and the trial of your faith is much more precious than the trial of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire.

The manifold temptations are of use in the kingdom of grace. The Lord turns them to account ; the Lord overrules them and makes them useful. They try your faith. And they try your faith in two ways.

First, They try it to prove its existence. They show where it is, for it is faith that bears up under them in a Christian spirit. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Then the trials, the temptations do not turn a man aside from the path of Godliness, they prove, they show plainly that there is faith.

And, *second*, These trials and temptations try faith, or make a trial of it to improve it. When it comes out unscathed from the crucible, it is stronger than when it went in. Exercise increases and strengthens it. Exercise develops it ; shows its qualities, and brings them out into fuller manifestation.

And this trial of faith is much more precious than the trial of gold that perishes. It is much more precious, because faith itself is much more precious than gold. And the trial which exhibits and improves one's faith, should be held by him in greater esteem than the trial of gold, although it were his own gold, smelted in his own furnace, and refined in his own

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crucible to come out for his own use. Gold is useful for its own nature and for the purposes for which men apply it. Especially in the shape of money, a man can procure with gold whatever is necessary for him in this life. But what are these in comparison with what faith secures? Faith secures peace with God, forgiveness of sins, a title to the inheritance, grace to aid us in our struggles here, and finally admission into the everlasting kingdom.

Other graces also are tried in the crucible of manifold temptations, such as hope, love, patience, humility, gentleness, meekness, temperance. They all undergo the process of purifying in the crucible of manifold temptations. But faith is mentioned as being the root grace, the grace from which the others grow, the fountain from which they all spring. And when faith is tried, developed, improved, all the other Christian graces are tried, developed and improved.

And surely this usefulness of temptations should alleviate the heaviness which they produce. If they are so useful, if they are turned to such account, shall we not bear them with much willingness and cheerfulness, seeing that they are so useful?

The *third* circumstance connected with trials that should lighten the heaviness which they produce is the issue of the trial which they constitute. Look at the issue. That the trial of your faith "might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Precious trial that has such an issue! Precious trial that shall be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ!

Christ is to come again, raise the dead, judge, wind up His kingdom. It will be a serious time, a serious event, and to be prepared for it by the faith, tried by the temptations, it shall be found unto praise, etc. Whose praise and honor?

(a) Christ's. (b) Believers. Praise, honor, glory! What a destiny! In this destiny, the trial of faith ends.

First, Believer, shrink not, faint not under trials.

Second, Unbeliever and doubter, would you perish?

DISCOURSE VII.

THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.

I Peter i : 12 : " Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; which things the angels desire to look into."

Ps. xcvi ; Ps. cii ; Par. ix.

HERE we have the prophets, the apostles, the Holy Ghost, and the angels, all combining to make the message of the gospel weighty and impressive, that man may be convinced of its truthfulness and importance—that believers may be guided in their duties and comforted in their trials ; and that impenitent and ungodly men may be led to believe, repent and turn unto the Lord with all their hearts.

We have already reflected on the character of the prophets, their virtues, their zeal and diligence in discharging the functions of their sacred office ; their inspiration by the Spirit of Christ. In this text we are further told that it was revealed unto them, that not unto themselves but unto believers in gospel times they did minister the things which were reported by

the apostles and their associates, that is, that the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow were not to become facts of history in their own days, but in future days; and that their prophecies concerning those things would be for the comfort and establishment of God's people in the days of the gospel.

Here we have also the apostles and their associates. No doubt they are meant by the phrase "them that have preached the gospel unto you." It was the apostles and their associates that preached the gospel unto the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia and the surrounding countries. About the preachers of the gospel I make the following remarks:

First. There was a goodly number of them, a number sufficient to make their testimony credible. Their number was not by any means insignificant. Their word would be taken in any court of law or justice in any civilized country in a case of life or death. There were enough of them to give credibility to their report and to impress men with a conviction of the truthfulness of their message.

Second. They were men of good character. They were such men as would deserve trust and confidence anywhere. They were in every respect credible witnesses. No court could throw out their testimony, on the ground of proved or alleged bad character. There is no such thing spoken of in connection with them. Their candour and general good deportment are acknowledged.

Third. They were painstaking, self-denying and devoted men. They had to face difficulties, and they did it. They could expect no temporal advantage. On the contrary, the course which they had to pursue involved them in all sort of dangers and difficulties and exposed them to stripes, confiscations, incarcerations and death.

Fourth. They were quite in harmony with the prophets in the witness which they bore, and the reports which they gave. They appealed to the prophets from time to time, in proof of the doctrines which they proclaimed; and the facts concerning which they testified. The only difference between the prophecies and their testimony was, that the prophets predicted what the Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand; but the apostles reported what they had seen and heard, things which had already become matters of history, in the life, teaching, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. They claimed that they and the prophets were at one. Let us see how they made this claim, by referring to some passages. Acts ii: 14; iii: 12-18; viii: 35; x: 34-43, and I Cor. xv: 1-11. These are a few; the passages might be multiplied to a great extent.

And not only could the apostles appeal to the prophets to confirm their testimony and their doctrines, but also the Holy Ghost who inspired the prophets was poured out in connection with the ministry and labors of the apostles. In my text we read, "them

that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

That the Holy Ghost here and "the Spirit of Christ" in the preceding verse were the same, there can be no reasonable doubt. Here, then, is a circumstance that adds greatly to the importance and the impressiveness of the preaching of the gospel by the ministers of the New Testament. They did it with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Sent down from heaven by the Father and the Son, in fulfilment of the Father's promise, and Christ's promise.

(a) Sent down to qualify them for their ministry. See Acts i and ii.

(b) Sent down to bless the truth to the hearers, to open their hearts, to convince, convert, and sanctify them.

And finally, we are here told that the angels desire to look into those things. The words are forcible which are here used to express the interest which the angels take in these important matters; they have a keen desire to bend themselves down and examine these things.

The angels study the gospel, and Why? What reason can be assigned? but that they find in it marvellous displays of God's goodness, love, mercy, patience, long-suffering, wisdom, holiness, justice and truth.

CONCLUSION.

1. To believers, here is a strong ground for faith; here is a motive to obey, here is a stimulus to study the gospel.
2. To unbelievers, impenitent and careless—a warning. Will you neglect what prophets, apostles and saints testified, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?
3. To anxious souls, encouragement.

DISCOURSE VIII.

PROPHETS AND THEIR PROPHECIES.

I Peter i : 10: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that shculd come unto you."

THIS epistle of Peter is addressed to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia and other places; that is, to Jews converted to Christianity that were living in those places. It was of great advantage that he could speak of the salvation of the gospel as a subject which was known to the ancient prophets, for all the Jews revered the prophets and held them in great veneration. They believed the prophets and valued highly the writings which they had given to the nation. The apostle took advantage of this fact for the purpose of enhancing the doctrine of salvation in the estimation of his brethren, and for establishing, increasing and confirming their faith therein.

The Jews had the fullest confidence in the writings of the prophets for good and sufficient reasons. The prophets were holy men, men whose character was without reproach, men whom all that knew them esteemed for their virtue and their piety; and they delivered prophecies which had already been fulfilled; and they delivered prophecies the fulfilment of which

the Jews confidently expected. When therefore the apostles could appeal to the prophets to confirm the message of the gospel ; when it could be shown satisfactorily that their prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in the person and in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the salvation of which the prophets spoke was the same salvation which the ministers of the new dispensation were proclaiming, the demonstration would be sure to produce a favourable impression upon the minds of Jewish converts; it could not fail to confirm their faith, to render them more joyful and steadfast in their profession, and to fortify their minds against the influences of the manifold temptations with which they were surrounded, and to make their love and joy predominate above the heaviness which their manifold temptations were so greatly calculated to induce.

Such a demonstration as this the apostle makes in this and the following verses—the 11th and the 12th, all of which might be taken together as the basis of one discourse. But it would be too much to attempt to go over them all at one time, therefore we will consider them separately and at this time confine our attention to this 10th verse.

I. CONSIDER THE SALVATION

of which my text speaks. Salvation is an important subject. We must never grow weary of studying it.

And no doubt the more we know of it and the better we understand it, the less we shall be in danger of growing weary of meditating upon it.

Salvation—what is the salvation of which my text speaks? The salvation about which the prophets were so anxious, and concerning which they made such diligent search? This salvation is the gracious deliverance from sin, and wrath, and hell, which God offers to sinful men through the mission and the mediation of Jesus Christ, His own Son. Salvation signifies redemption from the curse and condemnation of the broken law, forgiveness of sins, peace with God, acceptance in His sight, the removal of His wrath and displeasure, the regeneration and sanctification of our souls, a good hope in death, and perfect blessedness in the full enjoyment of God throughout all eternity.

Such is the salvation. Happy they who are partakers of it. We congratulate them. They are the people whom the Lord has blessed. Who is there that would not wish to be among them and to have a portion with them? Surely it is a desirable portion. Brethren, make sure of this portion. Let no earthly thing come between you and this portion. Shrink not from any exertion, or self-denial, or humiliation during your career on earth, that may be necessary to make yourselves sure of this portion.

On the other hand, how can we but bemoan the fate and the conduct of those who have no interest in this salvation. O how can we sufficiently express our

deep sorrow for those who neglect this salvation! O the folly of those who listen to the gospel with a careless and listless ear, and who cleave to the things of time and sense in preference to the things of eternity!

II. CONSIDER THE SALVATION

under the title of "grace," which is in my text applied to it. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." When you look closely into the structure of the text, it will be manifest to you that the terms grace and salvation signify the same thing. The salvation is the grace that should come unto the Christians of Peter's day. Salvation is grace; and here is a designation of it that opens up to us an interesting field of contemplation. Principles of deep significance, and of the utmost importance lie imbedded in the term grace. Let us endeavour to develop and enunciate them.

What is grace? What does the word signify? It signifies favour, kindness, loving kindness. It signifies in its application to the salvation a benefit conferred upon persons that do not deserve it. The salvation of the gospel is mercy, favour, good-will, a rich blessing conferred by God upon the guilty and the unholy and the undeserving. Let me develop this truth by the following remarks:

First, Salvation had its origin in grace; grace is

the source of it. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared unto all men." It was great grace in God to devise a plan by which sinners might be saved. It was of His grace or unmerited good-will to devise the scheme, to make the arrangements, and to enter into a covenant with the Son for the redemption of sinners. Here was grace indeed! grace assuming the grateful, pleasing and attractive character of love. For "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Second, Salvation is grace in the procuring cause of it—the interposition and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was great grace, kindness, mercy, good-will, free favor, love in Him that prompted Him to come, to suffer, and die for sinners. We had no claim on Him, we deserved not His love. We were rebels, sinners, hateful and undeserving sinners. But he gave Himself for us; He died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," and save us with an everlasting salvation. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. viii: 9.)

Third, Salvation is grace in the application of it. How is it applied? "How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?" "We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy

Spirit." "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." By the grace of the Holy Spirit we have the truth, we read it, all hear it, it is proclaimed to us, and by the grace of the same blessed Spirit we understand it, accept it, believe it, and rely upon Jesus Christ for salvation as He is offered to us in the scriptures. By His grace sinners are convinced of sin, enlightened in the understandings, renewed in their hearts and wills, and brought to Christ for peace with God. And by His grace believers are enabled to persevere in the faith, to fight the good fight, to make believing, earnest prevalent prayers at the throne of God, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lust, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. By His grace they are comforted, established, sanctified, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Such is salvation—grace in the beginning, grace in the middle, grace in the end: grace in the seed, grace in the blade, grace in the ear, and grace in the full corn in the ear.

O, believer! here is matter for gratitude, thanksgiving, rejoicing and praise. Fill your heart with the conviction that grace has come to you, give thanks to God, rejoice in His grace and praise His holy name. Worship and adore him. Be not backward nor ashamed. Here, too, is a stimulus to duty, a spur to activity in the work and ways of the Lord. Be encouraged, be comforted; be cheerful, hearty and hopeful, and diligently and zealously persevere in the path of duty.

And, O, unsaved sinner, here is a message of grace for you! God has revealed His grace. It is grace, a free unmerited favor that He proposes to confer upon you. O, do not spurn it, do not despise it, do not turn carelessly and thoughtlessly away. You need this grace, you must perish without it. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." O, accept it and be saved!

III. TO DEEPEN THE IMPRESSION

which I trust has now been made, consider that the doctrine of this salvation comes to you hoary with age, venerable for its antiquity, and for the character and the qualifications of its ancient ministers the prophets, "of which salvation, the prophets have enquired and searched diligently."

The prophets were remarkable men, holy men, men of good reputation, men who suffered for the services which they rendered in proclaiming the message of God to their countrymen; they were pious men and unselfish, and they had great love to their country, and great zeal for the glory of God. These things were acknowledged by all candid men who had studied the lives and the writings of the prophets.

There were schools of the prophets in existence among the Jews as early as the days of Elijah. In these schools the laws of Moses and the other scriptures as they were written from generation to gener-

ation were studied. It was usually from the ranks of the pupils and graduates of these schools that God chose those prophets whom He inspired to deliver His oracles to the nation, and to commit His word to writing for the benefit of future generations.

So they were students and they were prophets. They studied the writings which they found, and studied even their own prophecies. The prophets enquired and searched diligently into the grace of salvation. They searched and studied and prophesied. It was a matter of great moment with them. And they handed it down as that which men should faithfully preserve, accept for their own salvation, and hand down to succeeding generations, that they, too, might prize it highly, and keep it religiously and never allow it to be lost.

Thus does salvation and the doctrine concerning it come down to us hoary with age, and venerable for its antiquity, and for the character and the qualifications of its ancient ministers. It is not to be shoved aside, to give place to any new-fangled doctrine or product of *advanced thought*. No, this glorious doctrine of salvation by a crucified, a suffering and dying Saviour, is like the wine which improves with age. "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new for he saith the old is better."

Brethren, keep to this old wine of grace and salvation, this ancient gospel which the prophets delighted in, of which they prophesied, and which they

studied. Do you also study it, receive it, rejoice in it, and fill your hearts with the comforts which this ancient doctrine is so highly fitted to bestow. The doctrine of this salvation is precious above rubies. O, buy it and sell it not. Let it be a lamp to your feet and a guide to your paths. Let it cheer you on your pilgrimage through this world. Let it be your comfort in death, and your bright hope in the prospect of a world beyond death and the grave.

And is there any here that has not yet accepted this doctrine. I beseech you, accept it now. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. O, cast it not from you! "How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation." Believe and be saved. Amen.

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DISCOURSE IX.

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

I Pet. i : 11 : "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

IN my last discourse, confining myself to the text on which it was founded, I spoke of the general excellence and good character of the prophets. They were virtuous men, remarkable for their love of country, their zeal for divine truth, for the glory of God and for the good of the people. They were men of acknowledged virtue, benevolence, disinterested love, zeal for the glory of God and for the good of their people. What I mean is, that all candid and fair students of their history and writings make such an acknowledgment, so far as I know.

Josephus, for instance, speaks of the prophets with great respect in different parts of his works. And Maimonides, a Jewish Rabbi, says, "Prophecy resideth not but in a man who is great in wisdom and virtue, whose affections overcome him not in any worldly thing, but by his knowledge he overcometh his affections continually. On such a man the Holy Spirit

cometh down, and his soul is associated to the angels, and he is changed into another man."

All this discussion and exhibition of the good character of the prophets was meant to give weight to the doctrines of salvation and grace of which the prophets prophesied. To-day we go on to expatiate on other facts connected with the ministry of the prophets, which add still greater weight to every thing which they have written for the use of those who have alighted upon gospel times.

I. THE FIRST FACT

and perhaps the gravest and the most important fact connected with the ministry of the prophets of which I have to speak is, that *the Spirit of Christ was in them.*

The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets. They spake and wrote under His influence and direction. He inspired them. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

My text is proof, and there are many other passages besides that prove this doctrine of the divine inspiration of the prophets. In the Old Testament, take Neh. ix: 30, Ezek. ii: 23 and iii: 24. In the New Testament, take Luke i: 70, and II Peter i: 21.

The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets. Christ by His Spirit spoke in them. Their words, therefore, come to us with divine authority. Their words are a message from God.

(a) Here is ground for the trust and confidence of believers. The faith of believers rests upon divine authority. It may, therefore, be strong and unwavering.

(b) Here we have also what shows the sinfulness of unbelievers. How great is the sin of those who disbelieve and reject the words of the prophets; they disbelieve and reject the word of God.

(c) Here we have also what shows the error and the folly of those professing Christians who slight the Old Testament and say that, now, under gospel times, it is of no use or value, or, at any rate, that it is far inferior to the New Testament, and that Christians need not study it at all.

II. THE SECOND FACT

connected with the ministry of the prophets which makes their writings very valuable and weighty is, that they spake of the "sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow were the great subjects of which the prophets spake and wrote. To these they repeatedly refer, these they introduce into their discourses, apparently abruptly, and when, to a superficial reader, they have no natural connection with the denunciations or admonitions which they deliver to their own nation.

For corroboration of these reflections, I only refer you to such passages as Ps. xxii, Ps. xl, Ps. lxix, Is. liii, Dan. ix, and Zech. xiii.

According to these, and many similar passages, Christ was to suffer. The Messiah was to be a suffering Messiah. His sufferings were to be many and diverse and grievous. He was to be slandered, reproached, contradicted, reviled, persecuted, and put to shame and to death.

But, then, connected with all the humiliation and suffering, according to the prophets, there was to be great and marvellous glory. Glory was to follow. Or, as I might render it, Glories were to follow. The prophets spake of the sufferings of Christ and of the glories that should follow. (a) Glory to Christ Himself was to follow, and did actually follow, as we now know. (b) Glory to God was to follow, (c) and also glory to all His redeemed people.

III. THE THIRD CIRCUMSTANCE

connected with the ministry of the prophets which makes their writings very interesting and important is, their own diligence in searching into the meaning of them. They searched "what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify."

They did not know the full import of their own prophecies, but they studied them. They searched and inquired what time, or what manner of time it was to be when the prophecies should be fulfilled.

Brethren, I commend for your perusal and study the writings of the prophets, indeed, the whole of the Old Testament scriptures.

DISCOURSE X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I Peter i: 12: "The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Ps. cxlv: 8-15; Ps. cxliii: 7; Ps. li: 7-11.

MY discourse to-day will be on the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we do not speak of Him as often as we should. His work in connection with our salvation is very important. Christ has purchased redemption, and it is the Spirit's office to apply effectually to men that redemption which Christ has purchased; and inasmuch as man is not able to apply the redemption to himself, the Spirit's work in its own place is as necessary as was the work of Christ Himself. Without an atonement we could not be saved, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission; neither can we be saved without "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." For Christ hath said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I. WHO IS THE HOLY GHOST?

The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly teaches us to say, in answer to one of the ques-

tions therein proposed, "There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." According to these words the Holy Ghost is a divine person, of the same nature with the Father and the Son, and equal with Them in power and glory.

(a) The Holy Ghost is a person. He is not mere power or influence, as some have erroneously taught, but He is a being that has an identity and a personality of His own. To prove this doctrine of the personality of the Holy Ghost, a large array of scripture texts might be quoted; texts in which He is represented or spoken of as performing personal acts, and possessing personal qualities, and cherishing personal feelings; and also texts in which personal pronouns are applied to Him. Such texts are very numerous, and it is also so well known that we believe in the personality of the Holy Ghost, that I do not deem it necessary to occupy time in establishing it at length.

(b) It is also the doctrine of the Church to which we belong that the Holy Ghost is divine, that He is God. We prove this doctrine by passages of scripture which speak of the Holy Ghost as possessing divine attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence; by passages which apply to Him names of God; and also by passages which ascribe to Him works of God, works which only God can perform.

But I take it for granted that I need not dwell at

any considerable length on these doctrines of the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. They were long under discussion in the Church of God, and they were long ago settled by the Church to which we belong, and they are now generally, if not universally received by the denominations usually considered evangelical. I therefore pass on.

II. WHO SENDS THE HOLY GHOST DOWN

from heaven? My text says, "The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." And in reply to the question, Who sends Him down from heaven? I reply, The Father sends Him down from heaven and the Son sends Him down from heaven. He cometh down from the Father and the Son. The passages which I read this morning prove this conclusion surely.

There is an order in which it is proper to name the persons of the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is the scriptural order. This order is based on a good and sufficient foundation. The Father is never said to be begotten or sent, but the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Father sent the Son, and the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son send Him.

This order is observed in the economy of human redemption. In His official character the Son is subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit in His official

capacity is subordinate both to the Father and the Son. They send Him, and He proceeds from them. In the words of an intelligent divine, "The personal properties of the Spirit are as follows: He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, from eternity proceeding from them. He is sent by the Father and the Son, they operating through Him. He operates immediately on the creature."

III. WHAT IS THE MISSION

on which the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven? in other words, What does the Holy Ghost come down from heaven to do?

This question opens up a very important and wide field of contemplation. The work of the Spirit in connection with the redemption of man is very extensive. For under this head, I might advert to His agency in inspiring the Holy men of God, who in the early ages "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and who wrote the scriptures for the edification of the Church in subsequent ages. I might also speak of His work in preparing the human nature of Christ at His incarnation; and I might speak of His work in connection with miracles that were wrought previously to the advent of Christ. I, however, pass by these departments of His work, and proceed to consider His work in connection with the preaching of the gospel in apostolic and in modern times; for it is

of His work in connection with the preaching of the gospel and the building up of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that my text leads us specially to speak, as you will readily see by reading the whole verse. And in this connection the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven to do the following things :

First. It is the Spirit's work to fit and qualify the ministers of the New Testament for their ministerial work. He did this in the days of the apostles in an extraordinary and miraculous way, inspiring them, giving them the gift of prophecy, and the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles; and although the miraculous gifts are now withdrawn, yet He fits and qualifies Christ's servants for the work to which He calls them.

Second. It is the Spirit's work to accompany the word preached with "demonstration and power." In carrying on this part of His work He strives with man; He "convinces the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment," and He regenerates and converts true believers—those that become true believers.

The work of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners is beautifully described in the Shorter Catechism in the answer to the question, "What is effectual calling? Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel."

Here, you will observe, that the first part of the Spirit's work is to convince us of our sin and misery. Men do not naturally realize their sin and misery. They may, in a general way, be ready to acknowledge that they are sinners, but they can have no thorough conviction of it without the Spirit's work. "Of sin because they believe not on me." Conviction, as wrought by the Spirit, includes more than mere sorrow or remorse for sin. It has a special reference to the sinful state of men, because they believe not on Christ —He works on the conscience, awakening it.

Observe again, that the second part of the Spirit's work consists in enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ. He shows the glory of Christ's person, the excellence of His character, the beauty and suitableness of His offices. He shows that Christ is a suitable and an able Saviour. Men's minds are dark on these subjects. The Spirit enlightens them.

The third part of the Spirit's work, as here described, is the renewing of the will. He makes men willing in the day of His power. Men are not willing to be saved by Christ, and in Christ's way, until the Holy Ghost makes them willing. And when they are made willing, then there is nothing between them and Christ. Christ is offered freely, without money and without price. There is nothing between Christ and sinners but the want of will on the part of sinners, and when they are made willing then they embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel.

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Third. It is the Spirit's work to carry on the process of believers' sanctification after they have been converted and united to Christ by living faith. This He does by giving clearer and clearer views of Christ, by applying to them the motives to holiness, by communicating grace to help them in every time of need, by breathing in them the spirit of zeal and of a sound mind, and the spirit of adoption, and the spirit of prayer and supplication. Points that we need delay to prove.

IV. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF MEN

in view of the fact that the Spirit is sent down from heaven in connection with the preaching of the gospel?

First. Do not resist Him. Men do sometimes resist Him. Stephen charged the Jews with this sin, Acts vii : 51. Again, do not vex the Holy Spirit. Isaiah charges the Jews with this sin, Is. lxiii : 10. Again, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Paul warns the Ephesians against this, Eph. iv : 30. And he warns the Thessalonians against the sin of quenching the Spirit.

How great the crime and how great the folly of those that resist, or vex, or grieve, or quench the Holy Spirit! And every unconverted man who hears the gospel, and has been warned of his sin and danger, sins against the Holy Ghost in one or other of these forms—he resists Him, or vexes Him, or grieves or quenches Him. No doubt of it. Did the Jews in

their opposition to the gospel resist the Holy Ghost? What less are you doing who have not believed His testimony, who have not yielded to his strivings, who have not been willing to accept Christ for salvation? O be not guilty of such sin against the Spirit of God! but, on the contrary,

- (a) Cherish your convictions, do not stifle them.
- (b) Seek to know more of your sin and danger. How vile your sin, etc.
- (c) Listen to the sentence of God's law.
- (d) Rest not on false grounds.
- (e) Resist the temptations of your state.
- (f) Seek to know more and more of Christ.
- (g) Close with Him by faith. Accept Him.

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DISCOURSE XI.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

I Pet. i: 13: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Ps. xxxiii: 18; Ps. xxxi: 34; Ps. cxxx: 7.

THIS verse is the commencement of a series of counsels and exhortations. The word "Wherefore" connects what follows with what precedes; what follows is a practical inference from what precedes. "Wherefore," on this account, for this reason, "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

And the word "wherefore," does not draw its inferencing power only from the words, or the verse, which immediately precedes; it gathers force from the whole paragraph, from the third verse to the twelfth verse inclusive; for these verses consist of one closely connected piece of statement and reasoning. At the third verse the apostle gives thanks to God who, he says, "according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Then, he goes on to

state and develop further the principles and the consequences of this regeneration unto a lively hope, until he leads us up to a contemplation of the admiring gaze which the angels bestow on these things ; and in my text he breaks out into an earnest application of the whole, to the hearts and lives of believers.

A literal translation of the text would be as follows : Wherefore, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I exhibit it in this literal translation that you may see the more readily that the central, or chief part of the exhortation, is expressed by the imperative verb "hope." It is as if he were to say, Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, and that your hope may be of the right and genuine stamp, the hope that shall not be put to shame, gird up the loins of your mind and be sober.

In the words thus explained we have three things : First, the exhortation to "hope to the end" ; second, the object of this Christian hope—"the grace that is to be brought unto believers at the invitation of Jesus Christ" ; and, third, the attitude which all the other powers and affections of the mind should assume to give body and consistency to the hope—this attitude being expressed by the phrases, "gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober." These things we shall now consider severally in dependence upon the blessing and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I. THE EXHORTATION, "HOPE TO THE END."

Hope firmly and perfectly, with perseverance, steadfastness and constancy.

Hope is an important Christian grace or affection. It is frequently spoken of in the scriptures. In one place it is said, "we are saved by hope," so important is the place which hope occupies in the Christian religion. It is closely allied to faith, so closely indeed, that some students of the Bible have been ready to take hope and faith as different expressions of the same mental act, or affection. But they are not the same. Faith accepts the truth of the doctrines and facts of the gospel, and hope looks for the fulfilment of the promises of the gospel. Faith believes truth, and hope confidently expects the fulfilment of what the truth promises.

Now the apostle's exhortation is, "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you." He would have believers to keep their hope in lively operation, or lively exercise. He would have them to make efforts to keep their hope in full development and exercise, in their hearts. For like all the other graces of the divine life, it is strengthened and perfected by exercise. When by an effort of the will, hope is frequently directed to its object, and made to look around it, and contemplate it, it will grow in strength, and become less liable to be shaken and con-

cussed by the earthly and carnal influences with which it is here surrounded. Thus doubts, perplexities, and uncertainties will be kept away, and Christian comfort and usefulness will be promoted.

II. CONSIDER THE OBJECT

of the Christian's hope, namely, "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The revelation of Jesus Christ is the same thing with the appearing of Jesus Christ, at the end of the seventh verse. In the Greek the phrase is exactly the same ; and it means the same thing in both places. It means the second coming of Jesus Christ—His coming again "without sin unto salvation" at the great day of final reckoning.

Jesus Christ came once already. He came and tabernacled with men for a season. He came and went about doing good, preaching the gospel of His kingdom, healing the sick and showing His power over all the hosts of the enemy. But He went away again. He returned unto the Father, and He "sitteth at His right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool." He is now hidden from the bodily eyes of His people. They see not His face, they hear not His voice, but they walk by faith. He is thus concealed, but He will appear again. A revelation will be made of Him. He will come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels ; and then will He bring grace, rich grace to His people.

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And what is the grace which He will bring to them? What can it be? What else can it be, but the full fruition of the salvation which He has procured for them by His sufferings and death? At the revelation of Jesus Christ they shall be put in possession of "the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away." He will acknowledge them before His Father and before the holy angels; He will say to them, "Well done, good and faithful servants, you have been faithful over a few things I will make you rulers over many things"; He will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

And rightly and properly is all this blessing which is to be brought unto believers at the revelation of Jesus Christ, called grace; for grace is in the salvation of sinners from beginning to end. Salvation is grace from first to last. The incarnation of Christ was grace, the teaching of Christ was grace, the miracles of Christ were grace, the death of Christ was grace, the commission given to His apostles to preach the gospel was grace, the conversion of believers was grace, their perseverance in faith was grace, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them was grace, their resurrection will be grace, and their final acquittal and their admission into the kingdom of glory will be grace, great, marvellous, joyous, exhilarating grace.

It is the same thing that our beautiful Shorter

Catechism treats of in the answer to the question, What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? "At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity." My text says, "the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The Catechism says, "the benefits which believers receive from Christ at the resurrection." Both phrases signify the same thing. This will be the placing of the copestone on the finished structure of salvation, with shoutings of grace unto it.

What grace for this frail, dying body, after a season in the grave, to be raised up in glory! Sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; sown in weakness, it is raised in power; sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

What grace, to be "openly acknowledged and acquitted by Jesus Christ in the day of judgment!" acknowledged as His own people, His own redeemed ones; and acquitted by Him from all charge of guilt and sin! And oh, what great and unspeakable grace to be made "perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity!"

Such is the grace to be brought unto believers; such is the object of the Christian's hope. And who, therefore, would not wish and labor to have it lively and in full development and exercise in his breast?

III. WE CONSIDER THE ATTITUDE

which all the other powers and affections of the mind should assume to give body and consistency to this hope, and to make it sure to be the hope that maketh not ashamed, that shall not be disappointed in the end. This is expressed by the phrases, "Gird up the loins of your mind," and "be sober." We will look at these phrases severally.

And, *first*, "Gird up the loins of your mind." This is a figurative expression taken from the eastern custom of wearing loose, long robes, which it was necessary to gather up and tie with a girdle about the loins or waist, for work or for a journey. Gird up the loins of your mind, therefore signifies, see to the state of your mind, gather up its faculties and affections, put them all in a proper attitude towards the things of earth and sense, that you may not be impeded in your Christian work or your Christian journey. Gird up your thoughts and desires and affections. Bind them, gird them up with truth, the truth of God, which will prevent them from being torn by the briars and the thorns that are in the way, and from being defiled by the pollutions that are in the world through lust.

O, look and see how men that have not their thoughts, desires and affections bound up with the girdle of truth, in passing through the mire and among the thorns and briars of this world, are bespattered by its filth, and are trampled upon by the crowds of un-

godly men that crowd around them. Be not like such. Gird up the loins of your mind. Be tidy, and go through the world with clean, unsoiled, untorn garments.

Second, "Be sober." Be careful, vigilant, watchful, and moderate in the use of every earthly thing. You cannot abstract yourselves from the things of earth altogether. No matter how carefully you may gird up the loins of your mind, you will still have to move amid things of time and sense, and to handle them, and make use of them. See that you be sober.

Brethren, in the widest signification of this counsel, be sober, it is applicable in the direction of every desire and appetite and craving for the things of time and sense. It is applicable to eating as well as drinking, to work and sleep, and every earthly and fleshly gratification. Be sober, be temperate, be moderate in the use of every earthly thing.

But while the phrase, be sober, has a wide and general signification of this kind, it has a special reference to indulgence in strong drink—indulgence in the use of wine was the chief, if not the only strong drink that was then in use.

Excess in drinking was not uncommon then, and is very common now, and has been so ever since the process of distillation has been discovered and brought into public use. The danger is great, indulgence is common, and the sin of excess in drinking is very ruinous. Therefore the Bible speaks of it often, speaks of

it with strong condemnation, and with serious warning to believers. Of many passages that might be quoted, take the following: Prov. xx: 1 and xxiii: 21-29; Is. xix: 14, and xxviii: 1-11; Luke xxi: 34; Rom. xiii: 3; I Cor. v: 11; Gal. v: 21; Eph. v: 18, and I Cor. vi: 1.

Observe, that in several of these passages drunkenness is associated with the vilest sins, adultery, witchcraft, idolatry, hatred, murder, and that it is distinctly declared that the drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Brethren, you cannot be too careful for your own individual safety. "Be sober." "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

And if you wish to be helpful to others have nothing to do with strong drink as a beverage.

DISCOURSE XII.

EXHORTATION TO HOLINESS.

I Pet. i : 14, 15. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance : But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

THIS is an exhortation to holiness. It is indeed a continuation and an amplification of the exhortation which is contained in the 13th verse : "Girding up the loins of our mind." Sobriety and Christian hope are important elements of holiness. They are expressed partly in figurative language, but in the text which we have now before us, the subject of holiness is pressed upon us in plain, direct and explicit language. As obedient children do not fashion yourselves according to your former lusts, but be holy.

Holiness is an important subject. We must study its nature and its principles, and seek to practise it in our lives. We cannot be saved without it. It was an important feature of the image of God in which man was created, and which was defaced by the fall ; as it is also an important feature of the image of God in which believers are created anew by the Holy Spirit unto good works. Holiness is the proper and neces-

sary preparation and meetness for heaven. The un-holy shall not enter that glorious and happy place. There can be no true and lasting happiness without holiness: for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Webster, in his dictionary, says, "The word holy is derived from the word heal; and it signifies whole, entire or perfect in a moral sense. Hence it signifies pure in heart, temper, or dispositions; free from sin and sinful affections. Applied to the Supreme Being, *holy* signifies perfectly pure, immaculate and complete in moral character. And man is more or less holy, as his heart is more or less sanctified or purified from evil dispositions. We call a man holy when his heart is conformed in some degree to the image of God and his life is regulated by the divine precepts. Hence holy is used as nearly synonymous with *good*, *pious*, *godly*." That is pretty good for a lexicographer.

First, I shall open up and amplify the exhortation to holiness, and then give some directions which may be helpful in our efforts to comply with it. And may the Spirit of the living God, bless the word to us, and purify and sanctify us that we may be holy.

I. I AM TO ENDEAVOR

to open up and amplify the exhortation to holiness. It is contained in these words, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former

lusts in your ignorance. Be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

First, we have in this exhortation a prohibition, "not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance," that is, Do not fashion yourselves or be not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance. Lusts, is a term which is very frequently used in the scriptures for the inordinate, irregular and sinful desires of the human heart. Since the fall, human nature is very much under the dominion of lusts. The unconverted heart is a den of lusts. They are called the lusts of the flesh, and they are very hurtful to the soul, for they separate between it and God, and they spoil all its prospects for eternity. Peter says elsewhere, that they war against the soul. John speaks of them as the "love of the world," the "lust of the world," the "lust of the flesh," the "lust of the eyes," and the pride of life. Paul calls them "youthful lusts," "deceitful lusts" and "lusts of the flesh," and he earnestly counsels believers to "make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Now, from these lusts Peter would remove and separate believers. These he prohibits, for it is an important part of the grace of holiness to crucify, and crush, and check, and keep down these lusts. Be not fashioning yourselves according to these former lusts in your ignorance. Ignorance is the element that is favorable to the development and growth of these

ruinous lusts. Ignorance feeds and nourishes and makes them strong ; hence the indulgence of them and their outward manifestations are called "works of darkness." O, Christians, do not fashion yourselves according to the lusts ! Such is the prohibitory portion of this exhortation.

Second. We have, in this exhortation, a positive instruction or precept. "As obedient children, be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Here we have an assemblage of words which will materially assist us in getting at the true nature and meaning of positive holiness! Holiness is what is to be sedulously cultivated and followed. We have seen the negative or prohibitory part of it. Here is its positive side. Holiness is the obedience of children carried out in all departments and relations of life. Here we see that three ideas are included in the positive side of holiness. These are, first, the sentiments and dispositions of children of God ; second, these sentiments and dispositions of children manifesting themselves in obedience; and third, this obedience extending to all manner of conversation. To be holy is to be children, children of God in faith, love, zeal, and all kindred affections ; and to obey as children, the commandments and counsels, and exhortations which God has given us by the Holy Ghost in His blessed word ; and to carry this obedience into all kinds of conversation, that is, to give universal obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ.

Let this suffice by way of opening up, and amplifying, and illustrating the exhortation to holiness.

II. I PROCEED TO GIVE SOME DIRECTIONS

which may help us in our honest attempts to comply with this exhortation "to be holy in all manner of conversation."

First. To comply with this exhortation, that is, to be holy, we must make sure work of our regeneration and conversion, and union to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. These are all so intimately associated, so inseparably linked together, that we should take them all together under the mind's eye. We can never be holy unless we have first the seeds of holiness in us, that is, the grace of regeneration and spiritual enlightenment, and of faith in Jesus Christ. Holiness springs from a new heart, a believing heart, a heart quickened and regulated by the Holy Ghost, the filial heart that has in it the spirit of adoption whereby we call God "Abba, Father." Such a heart is the fountain of holiness, and we must see to it that the fountain is in us ere we can expect the streams of a holy conversation to proceed from it. We must have a seed sowing before we can have a harvest ; we must have a setting out ere we can make progress in a journey ; we must have a foundation laid ere we can proceed with the superstructure ; we must be the children of God ere we can be obedient children.

Second. To be holy we must set ourselves strenuously to the work of mortifying the lusts of the flesh. We have all remains of corruption within us, remnants of the former "lusts in our ignorance"; these must be curbed and curtailed, and checked, and controlled, and crucified, and mortified. This is plain from the text, and from many others of a similar import. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii: 12, 13.

Third, to comply with the exhortation to be holy we must endeavor to live by faith on an unseen Saviour, that is, to realize His presence, and to know and remember that without Him we can do nothing. Let us remember constantly, and realize that He is the vine and that we are the branches, implying that the relation wherein we stand to Him is a real and close relation, the relation by virtue of which alone we can bring forth the fruit of obedience and holiness. Let us believe in Him, therefore, as a near, a present Saviour, although He is unseen to the bodily eye.

Fourth. To be holy we need to live under the constraining power of Christ's will. He loved us and gave Himself for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." And this is what Jesus did for us. Brethren, meditate on this love of Christ, that it may constrain you to be obedient and holy. O! He came to give His life

for us, to rescue us from the gulf of perdition and woe. Will you not be obedient and holy to show your appreciation of such love, and that you love Him in return?

Fifth, That we may be holy we must have respect unto all the commandments of God. We must study His whole law, and all His counsels and instructions. How else can we be holy in all manner of conversation? The whole word of God is the standard of holiness. We must study it all, and have respect unto all His precepts. It will not do to try to be holy in one place and not in another; in one condition, and not in another; on one day, and not on another. As obedient children, be holy; and that you may be obedient, know the rule which you have to obey, study it, be familiar with it, take it always with you, and apply it in all the relations of life.

Sixth, That we may be obedient and holy, we must make use of prayer, and all the means of grace which God has appointed. "What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption? The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." To be holy, we need grace to help; to be holy, we need the Holy Spirit to dwell in us; to be holy, we need the blessing of God; and how can we secure

these for ourselves unless we use prayer and the other means of grace?

Here I stop for the present. There is a part of the text which I have not touched. I have left it purposely, intending to take it up again along with the verse that follows. Meantime, may the good Lord bless His own word to us, and especially enable us to be obedient children, and to live holy in all manner of conversation. Amen.

Mosa, April 2, 1881.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION.

I Peter i : 18, 19 : " Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; But with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

THE apostle continues to enforce the exhortation to holiness and the fear of God ; and for the purposes of such enforcement he has been using the holiness of God Himself ; and God's command to His people to take Himself as the great pattern and exemplar of holiness, and the certainty that God will judge impartially and without respect of persons according to every man's work. Here in my present text he brings forward for the same purpose the scriptural and important doctrine of the redemption purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of redemption is indeed the great doctrine of the gospel. The announcement of the doctrine of redemption is in fact the gospel. The gospel is the story of redemption ; or the good news of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In its primary signification, redemption means the act of procuring the deliverance of persons or things by the

payment of a price or ransom ; and in its secondary meaning it signifies the deliverance itself by money, labor, or any other suitable means. " In theology redemption signifies the purchase of God's favor by the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ ; or the ransom or deliverance of sinners from the bondage of sin, and the penalties of God's violated law by the atonement of Christ." So says the lexicographer.

More precisely and in the words of a living divine, Redemption " signifies deliverance from loss or from ruin, by the payment for us of a ransom by our substitute. Hence it may signify the act of our substitute in paying that ransom. Or it may be used to express the completed deliverance itself, the consummation of which is of course future. To say that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, (Gal. iii : 13), is precisely equivalent to saying that He has made an atonement for us. But when we speak of our 'redemption drawing nigh,' (Luke xxi : 28), of 'the redemption of the purchased possession,' (Eph. i : 14), of 'the redemption of our body,' (Rom. viii : 23), it is plain that the word signifies the deliverance of our souls and bodies, and the attainment for us of a heavenly inheritance, by means of the payment of a ransom for us by our Lord—a deliverance which, although commenced now, will be consummated at a future day. Redemption being deliverance by means of the substitute of a ransom, it follows that, although the ransom can only be paid to God, and to Him only as the moral governor of the

universe, we may still be said to be redeemed from all that we are delivered from, by means of the ransom paid in the sacrifice of Christ. Thus we are said to be redeemed from our 'vain conversation' (here), from 'death,' (Hosea xiii : 14), 'from the devil,' (Col. ii : 15 ; Heb. ii : 14), 'from all iniquity,' (Titus ii : 14) and 'from the curse of the law,' (Gal. iii : 13 and iv : 5.) While it is of course not meant that the ransom is paid to the devil, or to sin, or to death, or to the law."

I propose to-day, in dependence upon the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, to discuss the doctrine of redemption on the basis of the text before us, and following the drift of thought which we find therein.

The word "forasmuch," connects the text with the preceding context and introduces redemption as a reason or motive for cultivating holiness and for passing the time of our sojourn here with fear. You may remember that I made a brief use of it in that relation in my last discourse ; and to-day also, after we have got the doctrine of redemption well opened up, I may advert again briefly to the practical use which the apostle here makes of it.

The following is the arrangement which I intend to follow: first, redemption; second, the purchase or the price of redemption.

I. THE REDEMPTION.

I have already given a definition and a general exposition of redemption. I seek further to make it

clear, and to impress it upon the minds of my hearers, by the following observations.

First. Man is a sinner. Man is fallen. He has lost his first estate. He has gone astray from God by sinning against Him. A covenant was made with the first man, not only for himself, but for his posterity. And when he fell, they fell with him and sinned with him in his first transgression. So that all men are now under sin. "There is none righteous, no not one." "They have all gone out of the way." (Rom. iii : 10-12.)

Second. Sin is communicated from father to son. It comes down from one generation to another and none escape its contagion, and its baneful influence. It is communicated from fathers to children in two ways—by natural generation and by tradition.

(a) Sin is an hereditary evil. Coming down naturally. It alighted upon the stem and all the branches are poisoned by it.

(b) Sin is a traditional evil. It is communicated by conversation and by example. We receive it as a conversation or manner of life, from our parents and ancestors.

Third. God hates sin. It is an abomination to Him. His holiness is opposed to it and cannot be made to agree with it or to approve of it. His holiness demands that sin be punished. He "hates all the workers of iniquity"; and He is said to be "angry with the wicked every day." Both the ways and the

thoughts of sinners are an abomination to Him. Hence He is said to be a "a consuming fire," and a "jealous God." It is said, "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries and He reserveth wrath for His enemies."

Fourth. Because God is holy and hateth sin, and because man is a sinner, man has, by reason of his sins, come into a dreadful state of misery, distress and danger. Man is in a state from which he must be delivered, or he shall be miserable forever. The wrath of God is against him. The curse of the law is against him. Death has got dominion over him. He is spiritually diseased, and he cannot heal himself. And by tradition he has received a vain, profitless and useless conversation from his ancestors. And he is lost and ruined forever unless deliverance is procured for him in some way.

Fifth. While God is holy and hates sin, and just and seeks to punish it, He is also merciful, pitiful, compassionate and benevolent. And contemplating man in his fallen and lost estate, pitied him, and even loved him; for God, we are told, "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, God out of His rich grace, and great mercy, devised a plan by which His holiness would be preserved and His justice satisfied, and all that believe in His Son Jesus Christ, saved. He has devised the

great plan of redemption, whereby all that believe are redeemed from the curse of the law, from condemnation, from death, from the guilt and the power and the pollution of sin. And this leads me,

II. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OR THE PRICE

of redemption. My text says, "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Here we have in laying down the price of redemption, a denial and an assertion, both used to impress us with a sense of the value of it.

First. The denial. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold." No, not with such things, things that are earthly and that therefore are perishing and corruptible, however highly men may value them. Here we have the things most valued amongst men—gold and silver. Ye were not redeemed with these. No, nor with anything like them, or of which they may be regarded as equivalents.

Not even with the sacrifices of lambs and other beasts that were appointed under the law, with which the Jews had been very familiar, and to which sacrifices they attached great value and efficacy. But these could not take away sin. They could not cleanse the conscience. They effected a ceremonial sanctification

and redemption, but not the spiritual sanctification and redemption which take away sin, and the vain conversation coming down by tradition from one generation to another. Not by any such things were ye redeemed. Here is a denial of such things as we might suppose fitted to be accepted as a ransom, that our minds may be prepared for a deep and serious impression of the worth and value of the price which has been actually paid and accepted.

Second. The assertion, "But with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The blood of Christ is the price of the redemption of believers. Brethren, seek to be impressed with this truth to-day. With the blood of Jesus redemption has been actually procured. It is theirs who believe now, and it is proclaimed as the only means and method of deliverance for such as are yet involved in the vain conversation, which will eventually result in eternal death, unless they accept the great salvation, salvation procured by the blood of Christ.

(a) The blood of the Son of God as well as the Son of Man.

(b) The blood of a holy and spotless one. A lamb without blemish and without spot.

(c) The lambs and other beasts offered in sacrifice were typical of Him. And the laws regarding the choice of those that were healthy and sound, and without blemish, were typical and prophetic of His holiness.

ness and gentleness, His moral perfection and His glorious excellence.

Brethren, such is the price of redemption. It is here introduced for a practical purpose.

Be holy ; live in the fear of God, forasmuch as ye know that ye were redeemed at such a costly price. A holy and perfect sacrifice was needed, the necessities of the case were so great. God has been propitiated by this great sacrifice. Let your minds also be impressed and influenced by it.

DISCOURSE XIV.

FOREORDINATION OF CHRIST.

I Peter i: 20 : "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for you."

Ps. civ : 1, 2, 5, 6 ; Ps. xl : 8 ; Ps. xxxiv : 19.

AS you are already aware, the scope of the apostle in the preceding context is the enforcement of the exhortations to holiness and to the cherishing of the fear of God. For the purposes of such enforcement, in my last discourse we had the great doctrine of the redemption purchased by the precious blood of Christ, under consideration. In the verses on which that discourse was founded, the apostle contracts the blood of Christ with such corruptible things as silver and gold, and by implication and assertion holds up to view its incorruptibility and its preciousness. And in the text for to-day he still dwells upon Christ and His mediatorial work ; stating facts concerning Him which demonstrate that the redemption, which He has purchased with His precious blood, ought to be regarded as the chief source of motive, to incite and stimulate believers in the practice of holiness, and, in their anxiety, to pass the time of their sojourn here in fear.

The facts which are stated in my text concerning Christ are these, namely, that He "was foreordained before the foundation of the world"; that He "was manifested in these last times"; and that both His foreordination and His manifestation were for believers. In dependence upon the blessing of God, we shall consider these facts in order.

I. THE FIRST GREAT FACT

concerning Christ here stated is, that "he was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

The primary meaning of the word rendered foreordained, is foreknown; but it is often, as here, translated foreordained, and that properly, because in their application to the agency of God, foreordination and foreknowledge seem to amount to the same thing. God foreknows what comes to pass, because He foreordains that it shall come to pass.

You are aware that it is the doctrine of the Church to which we belong that God foreordained "whatsoever comes to pass." It is concisely and plainly put down in our Shorter Catechism in answer to the question, "What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." These words give the doctrine of foreordination a wide and extensive application; "whatsoever comes to pass," are the

words used. The doctrine of Christ's foreordination is therefore only a branch of the doctrine of universal foreordination.

Now, with regard to the general doctrine, I do not wish to say much to-day, farther than that I thoroughly believe it ; and that if we take the scriptures for the rule of our faith, I do not see how we can rationally oppose or deny it. The scriptures plainly teach it ; they teach ---(God doeth His pleasure among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth)—that of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, (Rom. xi : 36) ; that the salvation of men is “according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus,” (Eph. iii : 11) ; that believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, (Eph. i : 4) ; and in my text, that Christ as a sacrifice “was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God.”

I stay not to discuss or confirm further the general doctrine, but confine my attention to the foreordination of Christ. And I need not spend time in establishing this branch of the doctrine, for I deem that whatever objections men may take to the general doctrine, they can surely take no exception to the foreordination of Jesus Christ. I only add further, that it is abundantly represented in the scriptures that Jesus Christ was before the creation of the world, or from all eternity appointed, set apart, designated or foreor-

dained for the work of man's redemption. Before man was created, or a world in which man could live, and sin, and need salvation, God, in His eternal counsels, foreordained Christ for this great work of redeeming man by the shedding of His own precious blood.

And now, let us thank and praise and magnify God for foreordaining His own Son Jesus Christ, to be the great sacrifice for our sins, to redeem us from all vain conversation, and to make us a peculiar people, zealous of good works. For God foreordained Him, entered into a covenant with Him, and settled with Him the plan of our salvation, because He pitied us in our low and lost estate; because He contemplated our fall, and contemplating us had mercy on us, and loved us, and had gracious and kindly thoughts towards us. Such is the fact, God foreordained Christ, and such was the reason of the fact, God loved us with "an everlasting love," and now "with loving kindness" He is drawing us.

II. THE SECOND GREAT FACT

which is stated in my text concerning Christ, is, that He "was manifested in these last times." He was foreordained from eternity and He was manifested in time. His manifestation was necessary to give effect to His foreordination.

The phrase, "these last times," designates the period of the gospel dispensation as contrasted with

the Mosaic and the patriarchal periods. The Mosaic and patriarchal economies existed during the former or earlier times, and in these last times we have the gospel dispensation ; not that there was no gospel in the earlier times ; no, the gospel was preached to them & those earlier times as well as unto us ; but we have now the clearer light of it, we have the full revelation of its doctrines and mysteries, and therefore these times are pre-eminently the times of the gospel dispensation. And these times are called the last times, not that we may be led to suppose that the end is very near, but because the institutions of religion as we now have them, are not to be abolished to make room for other institutions, as those of the Mosaic and patriarchal times were abolished to make room for these which we now have.

Here then is a great and important fact, Christ was manifested in these last times. He was manifested, set forth, revealed, made known, brought near. He became Immanuel, God with us. He was manifested for the purposes for which He was foreordained ; He was manifested to "put away sin by the sacrifice of 'himself' ; to bring in "an everlasting righteousness" ; to open up the way of access to God ; to reconcile men to Him and to make them "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Consider the steps of His blessed and gracious manifestation.

(a) He was manifested by His incarnation. "The

word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i : 14.) The Son of God became the Son of Man. He took upon Him bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal. iv : 5.) He was a babe, He was a youth, He reached the full stature of a man, and He tabernacled among men going in and out like one of themselves; nay, more, He became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Is. liii : 3.). And He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv : 15.)

(b) Again, He was manifested by His teaching when He entered upon His public work. He went about teaching the gospel of His kingdom, and His doctrines were pure and heavenly, yea, even His manner and His way of speaking were such as to impress men with the thought that He was more than an ordinary man. He taught with power, "as one that had authority and not as the Scribes." On one occasion officers were sent to apprehend Him, but when they had heard Him they went back without attempting to accomplish their purpose, saying, "Never man spake like this man." (John vii : 46.) On another occasion all the people "bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." (Luke iv : 22.)

(c) Again, He was manifested by His miracles.

The great and marvellous works which He wrought upon the sick, the maimed, the blind and the dumb, and those that were tormented with unclean spirits, and even upon the dead, constituted a demonstration that He came forth from God, and that God had sent Him. He Himself often appealed to them, saying to the cavilling Jews, "Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him." (John x : 38.) And Nicodemus said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." (John iii : 2.)

(d) Further, He was manifested by His sufferings and death, for they were such exact fulfilment of prophecy regarding Him. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He is brought as "a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth." He was crucified and slain by wicked hands, but what they did to Him was what God "had determined before to be done." (Acts ii : 23). And then when He was crucified, nature itself conspired to make the manifestation complete, for the sun was darkened, the earth shook, and the rocks rent, and graves were opened, and dead bodies of the saints came forth and entered into the holy city. (Matt. xxvii : 51-53.)

(e) Further, still, He was manifested by His resurrection. By His resurrection, He was "declared

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to be the Son of God with power." (Rom. i: 4.) He was shown after His resurrection to those that were to be His witnesses to the people with "many infallible proofs." (Acts i: 3.) By raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory, God attested that He was the Messiah, that His offering was satisfactory, that justice was satisfied and the law magnified and made honorable.

(f) Lastly, He was, and is still manifested by the preaching of the gospel, the dispensation of ordinances, the conversion of sinners, and the building up of believers by the grace and power of the Holy Ghost. He was and He is to-day thus manifested. God has authorized His ambassadors to manifest Him, to set Him forth, to preach Him and make Him known. "I determined," said Paul, "not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." (I Cor. ii: 2.) And thus is He manifested to this day by the preaching of the gospel, and the dispensation of ordinances, and the establishment of His kingdom and cause in many lands.

This is the second great fact which my text declares concerning Christ and His mediatorial work.

III. THE THIRD GREAT FACT

which is stated in my text concerning Jesus Christ is, that He was both foreordained and manifested for believers. "Who, verily, was foreordained before the

foundation of the world but was manifested in these last times for you." For you, who are you? The next verse goes on to tell us: you "who by him do believe in God." You, means the brethren to whom the apostle was visiting, and in whom he had confidence that they were believers.

The apostle says "for you," signifying primarily those to whom he wrote, but not exclusively. By implication and conclusively the words must be interpreted so as to signify and cover all true believers. He was foreordained and manifested for you who believe, for you who are renewed, enlightened, regenerated, and actually brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, these are the facts. How impressive they are! With what power should they touch your hearts! These are the facts: Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and He was manifested in these last times, and both the foreordination and the manifestation were for you. This great business engaged the thoughts of God in His counsels from all eternity, and this great business came into actual history in these last times on which we have alighted, and it is all for us, for such of us as believe in Jesus Christ and are called according to God's purpose. And this has been all done that we may be saved, that we may be made holy, and delivered from the curse and power of sin.

Brethren, consider these facts; lay them seriously

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to heart, meditate upon them, apply them to yourselves and resolve to be " holy," and to " pass the time of your sojourn here in fear." Such is the practical application of the text to believers ; consider your redemption and be holy.

And before I close, I ask, Do these words apply to unbelievers at all ? Surely they do ! there need be no difficulty in turning them and shaping them so as to speak to them. The parties directly addressed were once as you are in sin, unrenewed, unsaved. The gospel was preached to them ; they heard it, they believed it, they turned, they were saved. So do you hear, so do you believe, so do you turn and you, too, will be saved.

Mosa, May 4th, 1881.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XV.

CHRISTIAN PURITY.

1 Pet. i: 22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Ps. xxiv: 4; Ps. li: 10; Ps. xix: 12; Ps. li: 2; Ps. cxix: 9.

HERE we have the purification of the souls of believers, and an exhortation to mutual Christian love founded upon it.

I. CONSIDER THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOULS OF
BELIEVERS.

(a) You are aware that the scriptures frequently speak of the sinfulness of man's heart and nature as an impurity, or pollution, or vileness. By reason of sin the human soul is vile, unclean, or impure. Sin is an uncleanness, a pollution. It is a vile and odious thing. It has degraded man's nature.

(b) The gospel makes known a method of cleansing. By the gospel the uncleanness is put out of the heart of man, so that it may be said of every one that comes under its influence, he has been cleansed, or his soul has been purified.

We are vile and unclean before God. But, blessed be His name, He has found out, and He has revealed to us, a method by which we may be cleansed and purified. Now look at this process or method of cleansing; my text describes it. My text shows how the polluted soul is purified by the grace of the gospel.

First. The subject of this purification is the soul. "Ye have purified your souls." Not but that the body is purified too, by the gospel method of salvation. Yes, Christ will fashion our vile bodies and make them "like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii: 21.) But the soul is the fountain that was first polluted, and from which the defiling streams have flowed to the body; therefore, the purifying process must begin with the soul. The soul is the seat of intelligence, emotion and will. To the soul spiritual life is constructed, and when it is quickened and purified, then the body will, in due time, be purified too.

In this process of purification the understanding is enlightened, the affections are turned to spiritual and eternal things, and the will is renewed.

Second. The means by which this purification is effected is the truth: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." The means of soul purification is the truth. The truth of the gospel; the truth concerning God and Christ, and our relations to God, and our prospects for the world to come. The truth is the

means. The truth as it is in Jesus, and which Jesus has revealed. "Now ye are clean," says Christ, "through the word which I have spoken unto you." (Jno. xv : 3.) The word of God is the means by which souls are purified.

Third. The nature of this purification is obedience to the truth. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." Obedience to the truth purifies, is, indeed, the purification. And this obedience may be analyzed into two elements, (1) faith, (2) action. The first thing in obedience to the truth is faith. It is first believed. There can be no obedience to it without faith. The second thing in obedience to the truth is action—the action or motion of the will, and the affections, and the speech, and the conversation. This is the purification—obedience to the truth in faith and works, both must go together.

Fourth. The agents, by whom the soul is purified. I say agents, for there are two, a subordinate agent and a chief or efficient agent. The subordinate agent is man himself. "Ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth." The truth is proclaimed and given to men that they may listen to it, believe it, and obey it in thought and speech and conversation. The truth is given to men that they may purify their souls in obeying it. It is the man's own action to listen, and to believe, and to obey. But, at the same time, he is not the chief agent in this business of spiritual purifying. Man is, by nature, so vile and so unclean,

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that he cannot of himself obey or purify his soul. And here comes in the work of the Spirit of God. It is His office to purify man's soul. It is His office so to apply the truth as that the man is conscious of his vileness, and led to believe and accept the truth for his soul's purification.

Fifth. There is here a very important proof and evidence of this purification, namely: "unfeigned love of the brethren." Ye have purified your souls "with unfeigned love of the brethren." Brotherly love is in the purification of the heart, by the truth, through the Spirit. But it is only in it in germs, and principle, and commencement. It needs repeated exhortation and inculcation to develop it more and more, and to bring it up to perfection, or to such a degree as may be possible during the believer's pilgrimage on earth. Hence,

II. THE APOSTLE BASES AN EARNEST EXHORTATION

on the facts of the purification which he has just described: "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, with unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

(a) See that you love. By this you will give a continued verification of your soul's purification. This is the fruit and evidence of it—a fruit and evidence of your purification. See, then, that you love.

(b) By nature and apart from the spiritual purification here described, men were "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus iii: 3.) This is what Paul said of himself and his brethren. But the grace of God in the gospel puts these things away, and brings about a change of soul and heart, which produces love as one of its leading characteristics. See, therefore, that you love one another.

(c) And let your love be pure and fervent. (1) Love one another out of a pure heart. A pure heart is a believing heart, and an honest heart, and an heart turned to God. Such is the pure heart; and the true Christian mutual love is out of such a heart. Such a heart is the fountain of it; such a heart is the seat of it. Love one another out of a pure heart. (2) Again, love one another fervently, not coldly and indifferently, but warmly, fervently. Dissimulation and dishonesty and coldness are diseases that prevail in regard to this matter. See that your love be fervent and sincere, and pure.

(d) And you may be sure that such a love as this will have most sympathy with the brethren in their difficulties and trials; patience with them in their errors and shortcomings; a forgiving of injuries done by them, and a desire and will to give them substantial assistance when they need it.

In conclusion, brethren, this is a suitable subject

for thought and meditation as the day approaches when we expect to sit at the Lord's table. Meditate upon it. Look into your heart and lives for traces of it. Cultivate it diligently. Ask the Lord to help you to cherish and make manifest this important Christian affection. Without it, what? (See I Cor. xiii.)

And are there not some here whose hearts have not yet been purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, and whose love is therefore neither pure, nor sincere, nor fervent? Well, if not purified, you perish. Seek it, seek it now.

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE LIVING WORD.

I Peter i: 24, 25: "For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

THE subject of which the apostle speaks in the context immediately preceding, is the word of God as the seed of regeneration or the seed of life in believers. This word he calls incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. And there are two senses in which the word sustains this character; first, it is incorruptible and liveth and abideth forever in itself as the truth of God; as such not one jot or tittle of it shall fall to the ground till all be fulfilled. It and the religion which it proclaims and inculcates shall stand in all firmness and stability when all human and erroneous systems of doctrine and religion shall have perished forever. Second, the word of God is incorruptible and liveth and abideth forever in its fruits and results in believers. It shall abide in the new life which, through the Spirit, it produces in regeneration. It is the incorruptible seed of the regeneration.

The apostle, wishing to set the incorruptible and living character of the word in a strong light, contrasts

it with man as the word finds him under the character of flesh. Man as flesh, or in his natural state, including his life on earth and all his earthly interests and concerns, is as grass, full of frailty and uncertainty and subject to withering and decay. But the word of the Lord, which by the gospel is preached for the conversion and salvation of sinners, endureth forever.

Such is the contrast which the apostle here establishes between man as flesh and the incorruptible and living word of God. We shall, in dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit, look at each member of this contrast.

I. THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE CONTRAST

is, in these words, "For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away."

Here we have man in his fleshly character, compared to the grass which withereth; and the glory of man in his natural, fleshly and earthly estate, compared to the flower of grass which falleth away. The doctrine of the passage is this, namely, that man in his natural state with all the glory which may belong to him, during his natural life on earth, is a passing, perishing thing, subject to withering and decay.

First. Consider man as flesh or in his fleshly estate. What is meant by this description of man and what is included in it? This signifies man in his un-

renewed state ; man by nature, man fallen from God and from holiness and happiness ; man in his fallen estate without God and without Christ in this world. This includes man's natural life on earth, man's bodily health and strength, and man's intellectual powers, and all the advantages which these can secure for man.

Now, my text declares that all these are like grass. Like grass they all wither and decay. They may flourish and be very gratifying to man for a season and he may think then, when these are in a normal and healthy condition, that he has all he needs, and that he need not care or be anxious for more. But they are all like grass. They are subject to contingencies and accidents, and if nothing from without occurs to mar or blight them, yet finally, through time and of their own nature they wither and decay. They are like the grass which may be crushed at any time by foot of man or beast, or which may be cut down by the scythe of the mower, and which, if it escapes these, will of itself wither and decay.

Such are the conditions and fate of the grass ; and like the grass in this respect, is man in his fleshly and natural estate.

Second, Consider the glory of man in his natural and earthly estate. Are there not some excellencies which belong to man, or at least to some men, which cannot be compared to grass in its subjection to withering and decay ? True, indeed, there are some heights of glory to which men may attain in this life. There

are some advantages which some individuals and classes possess over others. Some possess advantages of rank, and wealth, and natural endowments. Some are remarkable for their physical beauty, some for their bodily strength and prowess, some for their intellectual and mental adornments, such as wit, poetry, eloquence, and extensive learning. Are these also like the grass which withers and decays? O yes, they are like the grass, no better in this respect, or if you will insist on some distinction being made between flesh and the glory of man, between man as flesh and man in the enjoyment of the superior advantages which some enjoy; the only distinction is this, namely, that while man as flesh is like the grass, the glory of man is like the flower of grass. "The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away," and so does man with all his natural excellencies and earthly glory.

Where is now the beauty of Absalom? Where is now the strength of Samson? Where is now the glory of Solomon? Where is now the wealth of Crœsus? Where are now the ancient Greeks with their wit, eloquence and poetry, and where are the ancient Romans with their Utcedi and military glory? They have withered, they have perished from the earth, they have forever passed away. And, O, how soon and suddenly, is the natural life of man cut down, and all his earthly glory brought down to the grave! We have instances of it in our own quiet neighborhood, from time to time, and we have had it also in the sad

and melancholy catastrophe which happened in the midst of holiday gaieties in the city of London.* Such is man and such his glory, like the grass and the flower of grass which perish, fall and decay.

II. LOOK NOW AT THE SECOND MEMBER

of this contrast expressed in these words, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

We have seen the flesh and its glory withering and decaying. Let us now look at the contrast to this which the word of the Lord makes. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, and so also do man's earthly life and earthly glory, "but the word of the Lord endureth forever." The word of the Lord endureth, and particularly the word which is preached in the gospel endureth forever.

First, the word of the Lord in its nature and principles, as God's word, endureth forever.

(a) Its truth endureth forever. It will be true to all ages. No change of time can change its truth.

(b) Its principles of justice, rectitude and holiness endure forever. These shall not change. They are founded on the unchanging and the unchangeable nature of God Himself.

(c) Its promises shall endure forever. They are all sincerely made, and they shall all be fulfilled in their time and order.

*A reference to the boat accident in which many were drowned.

(d) Its threatenings shall endure in all their terrible nature and consequences. They shall endure and be executed on the impenitent and disobedient.

And not only does the word of God, as the word, endure, but the word as the seed of the new birth shall endure. All which it accomplishes in and for the regenerate shall endure. And it is in this aspect of its endurance, that it makes the striking contrast with the decaying nature of flesh and all the earthly pomp and glory of man. The word of the Lord, in its blessed work and consequences upon the regenerated, shall endure forever.

(a) The spiritual life which the Holy Ghost, by means of the word, communicates to believers, shall endure; for all spiritual life is indeed eternal life. The life communicated to the soul through the truth, is the life that shall become mature and fully developed in heaven.

(b) The forgiveness of sin which is conveyed and administered through the word to the regenerate, shall endure forever. The gifts of God are without repentance in this matter.

(c) The peace with God which is conveyed to the souls of the regenerate, shall endure forever. Time shall not cause it to decay. It shall not succumb to the influences of floods or storms. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

(d) The joy in the Holy Ghost, and the pleasures

of a pure heart communicated to the regenerate by the word of the Lord, shall endure forever.

(e) The title to the everlasting kingdom and the full fruition of that kingdom by our death and the grave, shall endure forever.

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

I Peter ii : 4, 5: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

Ps. lxxxiv : 1 ; Ps. cxxvii : 1 ; Ps. cxxxii : 13.

THIS is no ordinary house ; it is a spiritual house. It is a house made of lively stones which are built upon a living stone. It is a house composed of living, quickened souls. It is indeed the house of God, of which Jesus Christ is the foundation.

Have you never observed the fact that, in the New Testament we have no instructions nor directions concerning the building of churches, like the one in which we are here assembled? What reason can we assign for this omission? Why, plainly this, namely, that common sense exercised on our need, and on the fact that there was a temple at Jerusalem, and that the Jews had synagogues, would teach us to build houses of worship, if the worship of God was to be publicly observed. The New Testament gives directions about the worship of God, and about the assembling of ourselves together. And plainly, if we are to have meetings, we must have suitable places to meet in.

We are not instructed in the New Testament to

have plates for the bread or flagons for the wine, but common sense teaches us to use them. In like manner churches, places for the assembling of God's people, we need. We call them churches; it is not improper to do so. But we must ever remember that the Church, properly speaking, consists of the souls of believers. Material churches are rather the workshops in which the erection of the spiritual house goes on.

But let us look at the text, in dependence on the blessing of God's Spirit. It states certain things about a house ; and

I. WE CONSIDER THE NATURE

of this house. It is a spiritual house. It is not a material house. This spiritual house is made up of one great living stone and other lively stones that come to it, and are built up upon it, or in connection with it.

Plainly, we have here Jesus Christ and His believing people.

(a) Jesus Christ is a living stone. He is called a stone, to keep up the propriety and the consistency of the metaphor of a house. But He is a living stone. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." He is the life, the source of life, the author of life, the bread of life, the supporter and the sustainer of life.

(b) Men disallowed this living stone. The Scribes and the Chief Priests and the Pharisees rejected Him. They would have none of Him to be the Messiah that was promised unto the Fathers. They refused Him ;

they would rather have a murderer granted unto them, and they killed the Prince of Life.

(c) But although men disallowed Him, He was "chosen of God and precious." God had chosen Him and laid on Him the iniquity of His people. He chose Him for He was precious. Precious was He in His person, in His excellencies, in His official capacity, as the Mediator between God and man. Precious He was to God ; for He was His own Son, and to Him He had entrusted the salvation of His people. And He is also precious to all who believe in Him.

Such, then, is the living stone which God put first in the building, and which is the model according to which other stones are fashioned and placed. The rest of the materials of this spiritual house are also lively stones. Ye, saith Peter, speaking to believers scattered abroad, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house."

The term "lively," distinguishes these people from the rest of mankind. Lively stones these are. They have life in them. They are quickened and life is communicated to them.

Such, then, is this house, the nature of it, and the materials of which it is composed.

II. WE CONSIDER THE ERECTION OF THIS SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

First, Then, there is a foundation which God

Himself has laid in Zion, as the context plainly shows. Christ the Son of God, the Lord from heaven is the foundation.

The laying of this foundation took place in the counsels of God from all eternity—in the promises made to Adam and the patriarchs—in the actual manifestation of Christ at His incarnation and nativity, and in His sufferings and death. This foundation is ministerially laid in the preaching of the gospel, as Paul said, “As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (I Cor. iii : 10, 11.)

Second. There are other materials laid on this foundation and that compose the superstructure. These are the souls of men. “To whom coming as unto a living stone. . . . Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.” We have two words in my text that indicate the process of erection, “coming” and “built up.”

(a) “Coming.” “To whom coming.” Men who are in this spiritual house, come, have come to Jesus Christ. They are not near Him, they are not with Him, they do not rest upon Him by nature, or as a matter of course. As the gospel finds men they are far from God and Christ, and in order to be saved they must come to Jesus. Nor will they come unless they are convinced of their need of Him, and have

their minds enlightened to apprehend His preciousness and value, and His suitableness to be their Saviour.

O, my hearers, have you thus come to Jesus Christ? Have you believed in Him, and is He your Saviour?

(b) The second phrase that indicates the process of erection is, "built up." Believers are built up in this spiritual house; they are made to rest on Christ for salvation. They are orderly arranged in this structure, according to the various operations of the Spirit of divine grace. They rest on Christ, they grow in grace, they are edified, they are no longer a heap of confused and disorderly materials; but they are cemented together by faith, love, meekness, and all the Christian graces.

Third, There are builders who carry on the erection of this spiritual house

(a) God is the chief builder, without whom the subordinate bodies can do nothing. So the Psalmist says, " Except the Lord do build the house the builders labor in vain." The Father builds, the Son builds, and the Holy Spirit builds.

(b) But while God is the chief builder, men are builders, too. They are instrumental and subordinate builders. The prophets were builders, the apostles were builders, and ministers of Jesus Christ in every age are builders; and indeed, all who in any capacity, as teachers or counsellors, endeavor to bring men to Christ and succeed, are builders.

Such, then, is a short account of this spiritual

house, its foundations, its materials, the method of its erection, and the builders.

III. CONSIDER SOME OF THE PROPERTIES OF THIS SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

(a) It is a large house. At least, when completed, it will be very large. The lively stones will be "a multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues." (Rev. vii : 9.)

(b) It is a beautiful house. At least when it is finished, it will be extremely beautiful and glorious.

(1) It has an inward beauty consisting of the work of grace. (2) It has an outward beauty consisting in its organization, laws, office-bearers and ordinances.

(c) It is a strong and durable house. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it. The influences of time cannot bring it into decay. It shall last forever. The floods may come, and the winds may blow and beat upon this house, but it shall not fall. It will bear up against all opposition, and stand unscathed when all the works of men that are in this world shall have been burned up.

IV. CONSIDER THE PURPOSE

for which this house is erected, namely, to be a habitation of God, and that God may be served there forever.

God is its owner. He dwells in it. He is wor-

shipped in it. He rules over it ; He watches over it.
(1) To see what it needs. (2) To defend it.

CONCLUSION.

First, Let men beware how they deal with this house. It is God's ; He is owner, deliverer, defender. Let no man use this house for his own selfish ends. Let every man see that he does not spoil or corrupt this house.

Second, If God is master, owner, defender of this house, let men beware of bringing into its service those things which He has not authorized ; but maintain the ordinances of His worship as He has given and appointed them.

Third, Let such as are in this house as lively stones know that they are under care and protection which will defend them from all foes, and save them from all harm.

Fourth, Are there any here that are not lively stones in this spiritual house ? First, let them know that if they do not come to Christ and become part and parcel of this house, they must perish. There is ~~no~~ salvation for you outside of this spiritual house. You must perish if you remain as you are. But, secondly, know that the erection is still going on, and that lively stones are coming to the living stone, and why may you not come also ? O, why, why will you perish ? Christ can save, and will save to the uttermost all that "come unto God by him." Come, then, come to Jesus, the living stone, and be saved. Amen.

✓ DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

I Peter ii: 5: "A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Ps. iv; Ps. cvii; Ps. li.

In my last discourse we had the figure of an house to illustrate the relation between believers and Christ. That figure served a good purpose; it enabled us to bring under review several important principles and privileges. Christ is a living stone, and believers are, as lively stones, built upon Him as the foundation of a glorious house wherein God dwells, and which will be to His glory throughout all eternity.

But Peter suddenly, in the middle of a verse, changes the figure. He drops the figure of the house and takes up that of the priesthood. No figure from any earthly source can illustrate everything in the spiritual relations of believers; and in attempting to open up and explain figures, we must take care that we do not carry them too far, and that we do not make them mean more than they were intended to mean. The figure of the house illustrated one aspect of the believer's relation to Christ; it could not represent the willing service rendered by believers to

God, and made acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ ; but the figure of the priesthood represents this service beautifully. Indeed the priesthood, as ascribed to believers, can scarcely be called a figure at all, so admirably does it represent the position and the service belonging to them. The priesthood of believers, therefore, is the subject on which I wish to discourse to-day. It is an important subject ; and may the Lord guide our meditations and bless His own truth to our souls.

Three things are in the words of my text : the priesthood of believers, the service which they render, and how the service is made acceptable to God. These topics shall be the heads of my discourse ; and may the Spirit of the living God guide and bless us, and show to us the things that are Christ's, and comfort us. It is His office thus to bless us, and it becomes us, therefore, to look up for the outpouring of His blessing.

I. THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS. "AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD."

The priesthood under the Old Testament dispensation was the order of men set apart for sacred offices. Paul describes the duties of a priest in the epistle to the Hebrews. He says, "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Heb. v : 1.) The priests were the ministers of religion who rendered services to God on their own behalf and on behalf of the people.

They were types of Jesus Christ Himself, who is the divinely appointed High Priest of the New Testament. Jesus is the great High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of Himself has abolished all the sacrifices of the Mosaic economy, and has forever sanctified those that believe in Him. (Heb. x : 14.) He is the High Priest who has entered within the veil in the temple not made with hands, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

And being the great High Priest Himself, He makes priests of all that come to Him by faith. John, in the Book of Revelation, describes Him as "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen. (Rev. i : 5, 6). And here Peter says, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." You are built up, or constituted an holy priesthood by coming to Jesus Christ. Coming to Him, believing in Him, accepting Him, constitutes a sinner a priest; an holy priest. Every believer is a priest; and there are now no other priests in the New Testament dispensation but the whole body of believers. They are constituted by reason of their relation to Him, an holy priesthood.

They are an holy priesthood, because they are rendered holy by their interest in Jesus Christ, and by

their relation to Him. Believers are set apart, consecrated, sanctified an holy priesthood to render service to God. And this brings us to the second topic of our discourse.

II. THE SERVICE WHICH THIS HOLY PRIESTHOOD

render ; "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices."

The sacrifices which believers render as priests are called spiritual, to distinguish them from the carnal sacrifices, which were offered by the priests of the Mosaic dispensation. The latter offered up sacrifices of slain beasts, such as bulls and bullocks, and heifers, and sheep, and lambs, and goats. These were shadows of good things that were to come, a heavy yoke indeed, and beggarly elements of worship, which were imposed upon the worshippers till the time of reformation, the fullness of time, when Christ came, and by one sacrifice of Himself abolished those carnal ordinances, and set up a simpler and purer worship, a spiritual service indeed, as compared with the carnal service of the former dispensation.

And here let me set before you more clearly and in detail, the spiritual sacrifices which believers, the New Testament holy priesthood, offer to God.

Paul says, in the 12th chap. of Romans, " I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." }

In Hebrews, 13th chap., he says, "By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not ; for with such sacrifice God is well pleased." Again, in Philippians, he says, "But I have all, and abound : I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." (Philip. iv : 18.) These are specimens of the descriptions of the spiritual sacrifices. Even the Psalmist, although he belonged to the earlier and ceremonial dispensation, understood something of these spiritual sacrifices, for he says in the 107th Psalm, "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving and declare his works with rejoicing"; in the 116th Psalm, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord"; and in the 51st Psalm, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Guided by such passages as these which I have just quoted, I make the following list of the spiritual sacrifices which believers offer to God.

(a) The contrition of the gracious soul in the experience of repentance is one of the spiritual sacrifices. Without repentance and contrition, sorrow for sin and brokenness of heart, no acceptable service can be rendered to God.

(b) Another spiritual sacrifice is prayer, an ac-

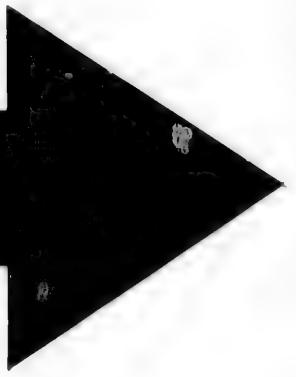
knowledgment of sin and a petition for pardon through the blood of atonement. This is one of the spiritual sacrifices which the Holy Spirit directs believers to offer to God.

(c) Another spiritual sacrifice is praise and thanksgiving. It is a "comely thing" to praise Him. Praise is comely, and when offered from a true heart and in the exercise of faith, it is pleasing to God; for He says, "Whosoever offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." (Ps. 1: 23.)

(d) Doing good to others, and communicating with them of our substance, out of love to God and Jesus Christ, is a spiritual sacrifice which believers offer and which God accepts. Liberality in giving to the needy, and for the spread of the gospel of Christ, is a spiritual sacrifice. (Heb. xiii: 16.)

(e) Finally, the presenting of our bodies is a living sacrifice, which is a reasonable service we owe to God (Rom. xii: 1), for all the mercy and the goodness shown towards us. And not the body without the spirit; no, without the spirit it would not be a living sacrifice. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price, therefore it is our duty to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his. (I Cor. vi: 20.)

Such are the spiritual sacrifices, which believers, as priests, offer to God. Brethren, before I go further, I ask, Do you offer these to God? If you have come to Christ as unto a living stone, you are built upon



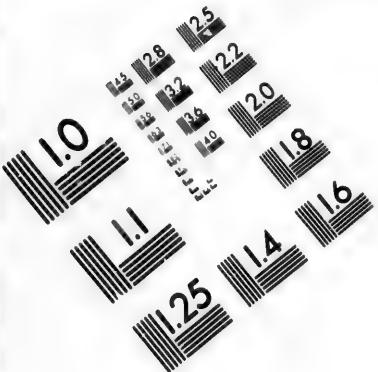
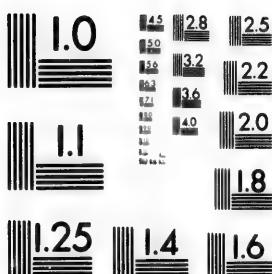
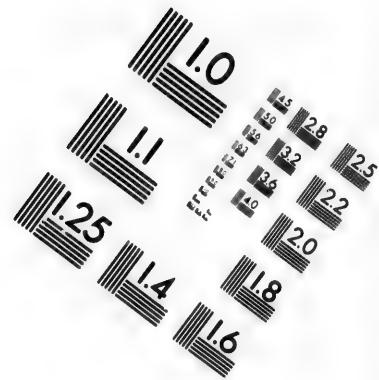
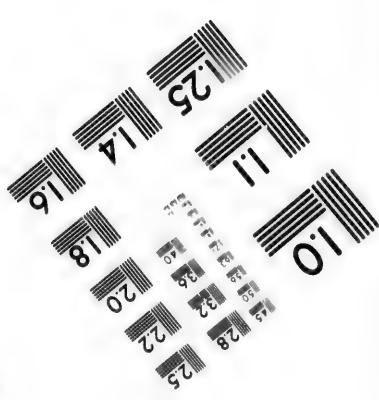


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Him as a spiritual house for Him to dwell in, and as an holy priesthood to render unto Him spiritual services, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. And if you do not honestly and sincerely offer up spiritual sacrifices, you have not come to Christ, you are yet in "the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." O, I fear there are some of you yet in that state. I fear it, I fear it ! I wish I had proof that you were all brought nigh and cleansed and sanctified, and made an holy priesthood.

Some of you are, I have no doubt. To you that offer up the spiritual sacrifices, let me say, be encouraged. There may be many imperfections about them considered in themselves and as from you. But they are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

III. THE THIRD TOPIC

which I ask you to consider is this, viz. : How the service—the offering up of the spiritual sacrifices, is rendered acceptable to God. Our text says, It is acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

O precious Jesus Christ ! No wonder that the apostle should go on to say, as he does in the context, that "to you therefore, who believe he is precious." Precious Christ ! precious Jesus ! By Him we are reconciled to God, by Him we obtain the forgiveness of our sins, by Him we have access into the grace wherein we stand, and by Him the spiritual sacrifices which we offer are rendered acceptable to God. By Him we

have everything valuable and precious which the gospel reveals. By Him we have life, by Him we have peace ; by Him we have the acceptance of our persons, and the acceptance of our services.

Brethren, love Him, rejoice in Him, serve Him. O be devoted to His service, and honor, and glory. We cannot do too much to show our gratitude to Him, and express our love to Him. Alas ! that our love is so cold and that our services are so imperfect. Let us go on to perfection. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, for we have an high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. And as for those that have not come to Him they are not made an holy priesthood.

DISCOURSE XIX.

CHRIST THE CORNER STONE.

I Peter ii: 6: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

Psalm cxviii.

THIS is a quotation from Is. xxviii: 16. The citation is not made with verbal exactness, but the apostle gives the general sense of the passage, following somewhat closely the Greek translation of the Old Testament scripture. The passage as it is in Isaiah, runs thus, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; He that believeth shall not make haste."

It is a prophesy concerning Christ Jesus our Lord, given in the midst of a series of terrible denunciations against Israel, especially Ephraim, for their sins, and given for the encouragement and comfort of the residue that were faithful in the midst of the general depravity. That it is a prophesy concerning Christ is put beyond a doubt by the use which Peter here makes of it, for he applies it manifestly to Christ, and finds the fulfilment of it in the relation subsisting between Christ and

believers. The words "Wherefore also," introducing the citation as a passage that is in accordance with what Peter has been saying in the verses immediately preceding my text, and that, in fact, corroborates what Peter has said concerning the relation between Christ as the living stone, and His people as lively stones coming to Him and built upon Him.

Peter uses a good many Jewish ideas and figures. It was natural for him to do so, apart from the fact that he was guided by the Holy Ghost, for he was a Jew by birth and by training. He uses in the text and context, the types of the temple and the priesthood, and the sacrifices. And what more appropriate figures can be used than those which God, from the first, authorized to be used, as types of the great things of His spiritual kingdom.

I. I EXPLAIN HOW CHRIST

is a corner stone, and the chief corner stone. And yet I scarcely need do this now, for I did it to a considerable extent in my discourse on the fourth verse, and the first part of the fifth verse.

The corner stone serves the purpose of binding the two walls together, the one on this side and the one on that side; and the chief corner stone is in the foundation. It is both a foundation, as Isaiah saith, and a corner stone.

And here we have a beautiful figure of Christ, on

whom sinners may build their hopes of peace with God, and who unites in one both Jews and Gentiles, and so makes peace, peace with God, and peace among men themselves.

And Jesus is the chief corner stone, to distinguish Him from others who, in a subordinate sense, have been called a foundation. Paul says in the epistle to the Ephesians, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii: 19-22.)

II. I WILL ENDEAVOR TO EXPLAIN THE LAVING OF THIS
CORNER STONE.

First, He that lays it is God. "Behold," He says, "I lay in Zion a chief corner stone." God has laid this chief corner stone. None other could have done it. He devised the way by which sinners are saved. He made His plan from all eternity, and made it known to Adam, and the patriarchs, and the prophets. He appointed His own Son Jesus Christ to be the foundation and the chief corner stone in the spiritual temple

in which He Himself dwells. God has laid the corner stone.

Second. He has laid the chief corner stone in Zion. Zion signifies His church on earth. The Jews were this church till the coming of Christ, but now, under the gospel, its boundaries are extended, and it includes believers of all nations and all peoples. Here God has laid the chief corner stone. The Jews, as a nation, were preserved amidst all the judgments and dispersions that came upon them, till Christ appeared amongst them. Amongst them He was born, amongst them He taught, amongst them He died, and the first heralds of His gospel were of them ; and, to this day, the church is the ground and pillar of the truth, and she holds up Christ before the world that men may believe in Him and be saved.

Third. The laying of the chief corner stone in Zion was accomplished typically, by priests and sacrifices; prophetically, by David, and Isaiah, and Zechariah, and others who made predictions about Jesus Christ before He came; actually, by the incarnation of Christ, by His ministry, and by His death ; and ministerially, it is now laid by the preaching of the gospel. Thus has God laid this corner stone in Zion. He appointed, sent, confirmed, and delivered Him up, and upheld and sustained Him, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but have everlasting life.

So much as an explanation of the laying of this chief corner stone.

III. LOOK AT SOME PROPERTIES

of this chief corner stone as indicated by the description here given of it, "a chief corner stone, elect, precious" stone. Chief, elect, precious are terms which indicate excellent properties in this interesting object. Stone—hard, firm, durable, unyielding ; chief above others ; elect—chosen, set apart ; precious—for rarity, intrinsic excellence and usefulness.

Now all these, and similar properties, are in Jesus Christ, to qualify Him to be the Saviour of men. He has strength, and power, and authority to sustain and support His people and to restrain and conquer their foes ; He has wisdom to guide in all intricate and dangerous circumstances ; He has gentleness, meekness, and kindness to encourage the weak and the timid ; and He has all the beauty and comeliness of holiness to make Him an example and a pattern to be followed, in all circumstances, relations, and positions in which we may be placed.

Blessed corner stone ; blessed Jesus, what excellencies and useful and necessary properties are there that He does not possess ! He possesses all the excellencies of the Godhead, being "infinite, eternal and unchangeable; in his being wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth" ; and He possesses also all the manly and attractive excellencies of human nature, sinless and undefiled. And such a Saviour

became us ; such an High Priest who is holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from sinners." (Heb. vii: 26.) In every way He is qualified to teach, lead, guide, protect and save us. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Heb. vii: 25.)

Such is the chief corner stone, such the Saviour whom we preach and hold up to the admiring gaze of men ; whom we commend for His excellencies, and recommend to sinners as a Saviour whom they may trust, and a friend that will stick closer than a brother.

IV. CONSIDER THE BENEFIT

which He confers upon men, and the way in which they become partakers of this benefit. "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." Isaiah says in the passage, in its original form, "He that believeth shall not make haste." The meaning is the same ; confusion and haste coming to the same thing ; and not being confounded and not making haste being of the same import. He that makes haste is afraid, or ashamed, or confounded ; and he that is confounded will make haste to escape from the position in which the confusion has come upon him ; and the sinner who has neglected the proper time and the proper method for effecting his escape, will, by his haste, only the sooner bring about his own ruin. The plain meaning therefore is, he that believeth shall be saved from guilt,

from shame, from woe ; he shall have forgiveness of sin, peace with God, and a title to the everlasting inheritance beyond death and the grave. The benefit is salvation, and the way by which men become partakers of it is faith ; they become partakers of the benefit by believing. And when we look over the text we find in it the *act* of faith, the *object* of faith, the *warrant* of faith, and the *fruit* of faith.

First, The act of faith is, believing, and believing is the act or exercise of a man's mind, accepting, receiving, confiding, resting, and trusting. It is the act of the soul receiving the truth of God, believing it, and accepting Christ as a Saviour who is able and willing to save to the uttermost. It is the man, the sinner, that believes ; and in believing he becomes sure that the testimony of God is true, that the gospel is true, and he accepts Jesus Christ, and trusts in Him for salvation, as He is offered in the gospel.

Second, The object of faith, therefore, as I have just said, is the truth and testimony of God, and especially Jesus Christ the chief corner stone laid in Zion, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but be saved. Faith rests on Christ as its object, as our Shorter Catechism so beautifully says, "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel."

Third, The warrant of faith is the authority of God speaking in the word. God gives testimony con-

cerning his Son ; we have this testimony in the text ; we have it in numerous passages ; we have it up and down throughout the Bible. God declares that He is His beloved Son, that He is pleased with Him, that He has accepted His sacrifice, and that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. When a man does not believe he rejects God's testimony, indeed makes God a liar, treats Him as such ; and on the other hand, when man believes he accepts God's testimony, rests in God's authority, and trusts in Christ for salvation.

And *Fourth*, This is the fruit of faith, even the salvation of the soul. Salvation from hell, from guilt, from confusion, from wrath, from woe.

O, believer! rejoice—love—obey—resist sin—walk in holiness.

O, unbeliever! what will become of you? Haste, shame, confusion. O, believe, and be saved.

DISCOURSE XX.

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS.

I Peter ii: 7, 8: "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

FROM the earliest ages of the history of redemption there have been two classes of gospel hearers, namely, believers and unbelievers, or the disobedient as the second class are called in my text. These two classes exist in our own day. And as in former times few found the narrow gate while many walked in the broad way, so the case seems to stand to-day; the broad way seems to be thronged, while few find the straight gate and enter therein. These two classes are brought before us in our text. And in dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit, I shall endeavor to explain the descriptions that are here given of them. This will lead me to sketch these two classes in a way that may assist those who wish to know with certainty to which class they belong.

I. WHO ARE THE BELIEVERS?

Peter says, "You which believe." It may seem to be a simple question, this; a question not difficult to

settle. But it is a very important question ; and each one of us should, with the greatest seriousness and gravity, endeavor to settle with regard to himself the question, whether he is among the class of persons who believe. Who are the persons here to-day to whom the words may be applied, "you that believe" ?

Those that believe are the persons who have heard the gospel and accepted it for their souls' salvation. This is a general statement concerning believers, and it involves much, some particulars of which I lay out in detail as follows :

(a) Believers are persuaded that they are sinners ; that they are guilty ; that they are exposed to wrath ; that they deserve God's displeasure for their sins and transgressions ; and that they cannot save themselves.

(b) Further, they are persuaded of the truth of the gospel ; that is, that God sent His own Son to seek and to save lost men ; that the Son of God took upon Him human nature ; that He dwelt among men for a season ; that He died to atone for sin ; that He rose again on the third day, and that He ascended to the right hand of God the Father to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sin.

(c) Further still, they look up to this Saviour and accept Him as their own ; they believe that "He is able and willing to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him ;" they pray God to forgive their sins for Christ's sake ; they strive to follow Him,

and they are anxious to glorify and serve Him. Such are the believers.

II. WHO ARE THE DISOBEDIENT?

The word disobedient here signifies unpersuaded; this is the literal translation of it. And the unpersuaded are those who hesitate about the truth of the gospel. The gospel is a matter of uncertainty and doubt and speculation to them. They hesitate about it, or they reject it altogether and continue in impenitence and unbelief.

The unpersuaded are the unbelieving, and the unbelieving are the disobedient. To say that a man is disobedient and to say that he is unbelieving, amounts very much to the same thing. There is little or no difference between the two terms, disobedient and unbelieving; for unbelief is itself the great disobedience, and the source of all other disobedience. The incredulous are the disobedient and the unbelieving. They reject God's truth and follow the lie of the devil, as did their mother Eve.

III. CONSIDER NOW HOW THESE TWO CLASSES ARE EFFECTED TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST.

First, "Unto you which believe, he is precious." That is, Christ is precious to those who believe, or, as it is in the marginal reading, He is an honor to them. Christ is an honor to those; He is their jewel; He is glorious and precious in their estimation.

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Now what is it that makes things precious to men? I answer, their usefulness for food, or drink, or clothing, or comfort, or enjoyment in any way. Or their associations with places or persons in whom they have an interest.

Is Christ precious on such grounds? Doubtless He is precious on such grounds; for who, or what thing, or person is useful as He is to believers. I make mention of a few things which make Christ precious. First, His fitness to save by reason of the union of the divine nature with the human in His one person; second, His fitness to save by reason of the graces communicated to Him, and the fulness of the Spirit given to Him; third, His complete suitableness to the souls of His people in all their wants and in all their difficulties. Whatever their wants may be Christ can supply them; and whatever their difficulties may be Christ can overcome them. Are they in death? He is life. Are they in darkness? He is light. Are they guilty? He is righteousness. Are they sick? He is a physician. Are they hungry? He is bread. Are they thirsty? He is drink. Fourth, The personal and individual interest in Him. He is their own, their precious Saviour.

Now, it is by faith that all this is discovered, apprehended, and self-applied. Faith apprehends the excellencies of Christ. Faith receives Christ and brings the soul into conjugal relations to Him. Christ and believers belong to each other. They are Christ's, Christ is theirs.

Such is the way in which believers are affected towards Christ. Christ is precious to them.

Second, Those who are disobedient are differently affected towards Christ, as my text abundantly shows. Their affections are turned away from Him; they reject Him. This is the general sense of this passage. He that was disallowed by the builders, and that has become the head of the corner, has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. They stumble at the word, and that involves stumbling at Him.

(a) Consider their folly in treating the Son of God in that manner. Their stumbling at Him does not shake or move Him. Although the builders have disallowed Him, and these disbelieving ones stumble at Him, yet He remains firm and steadfast, the chief corner stone.

(b) Consider their unreasonableness in this their conduct towards Christ. They stumble at Him because they stumble at the word. They stumble, doubt, hesitate. They have objections; they cannot explain or understand everything, and because they cannot, they reject all. The apostle does not mention the particular difficulties which these had. It was not necessary. One class of stumbled will have one kind of objection, another class will have another kind. In many instances, if not in all instances, the objections which unbelievers have, are so silly, trifling and unreasonable, that it is not either wise or necessary to make mention of them, or to try to explain or answer them.

The cavils and objections which the leaders of this class put forward are often so bold, daring, impudent and unreasonable, yea, even brutish, that perhaps the best treatment of them would be just the treatment which Peter gives them, namely, simply to refer to them ; declare that they stumble, leave them in God's hands and pass on. But they are not always so let alone. Able men on the Christian side have answered them, and answered them ably and sufficiently. And any one that has been looking at the stumbling of the disobedient can easily procure the replies that have been published, such as Whately's " Historic Doubts " ; Leslie's " Short Method with the Deists " ; Douglass' " Criterion " ; Pearson on " Infidelity " ; Cook's " Boston Monday Lectures " ; and Parker's " Reply to Ingersoll."

(c) Consider their misery in treating Christ as they do. Their misery is, that their consciences cannot be at ease ; their prospects for the future are dark and gloomy, and uncertain, and there is no hope for anything better in regard to them than a " fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation " to consume them as adversaries. (Heb. x : 27.)

(d) Lastly, consider the sovereignty of God's decrees towards these disobedient ones. My text says, " Whereunto also they were appointed." Now, there can be no doubt that this statement looks back and refers to all the previous statements made in this sense regarding them. It refers to, and accounts for their disobedience, their stumbling and their offence.

But who was it that appointed them, and when were they appointed thereunto? Only one answer can be given to these questions. It was God that appointed them in His decree and counsel from all eternity.

It may seem to men a hard and unforbidding doctrine, and some may be ready to reject all because they cannot reconcile it to other doctrines. But it is in the Bible, and the best way for us to deal with it is to adopt in reference to it the prayer of Jesus Himself, who said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 25.) As He looked on all the works of His hands at creation, and called them all good, so this way of dealing with men seemed good in His sight. Let us therefore bow submissively and in faith to the sovereign decree of God.

IN CONCLUSION.

First, To believers I say, Meditate on the preciousness of Christ; the foundation of your hope, your blessed Saviour, your chief good. Be not surprised that many reject Him.

Second, To unbelievers, stand up straight; cease your stumbling; cease your cavilling, and your objecting, and your unbelief, and your disobedience. Believe, accept Christ and be saved.

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE MARVELLOUS LIGHT.

I Peter ii : 9 : "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Ps. cx : 1-4 ; Ps. viii : 3-5 ; Par. lxiii : 3.

THE word "*but*" indicates a contrast ; it is here used to introduce the description which my text contains of believers as contrasted with unbelievers. Here we have the gracious and dignified state in which believers are, as contrasted with the condition of unbelievers which is depicted in the preceding verse.

Contrasts set things in a strong light, and are highly calculated, when judiciously used, to make deep impressions upon us. In particular, when believers see their own gracious and favorable condition in contrast with the condition of the impenitent and the ungodly, it makes them grateful and humble, and it lets them see the obligation under which they lie to improve their privileges, and to glorify God by an honest and holy walk becoming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the description of believers which my text con-

tains we have the following points, which I will make the topics of discourse on this occasion.

1. The state in which they once were. 2. The state into which they have been brought. 3. The principle or power that brought about the change ; and, 4. The dignity which belongs to them in their present condition.

I. THE STATE IN WHICH BELIEVERS ONCE WERE.

This is described by the term darkness. "Called you out of darkness."

Darkness is frequently used in the scriptures, as a figure of the state in which men are as sinners and in their alienation from God. It is not very long since I explained from this pulpit the figurative use of darkness, and therefore I presume I need not stay long on this part of my discourse to-day.

Darkness is blindness ; darkness is ignorance ; darkness is bad feeling ; darkness is bad conduct ; darkness is bad hope, a hope that shall be put to shame and perish. All this is in the darkness in which men are by reason of sin and alienation from God. I need not now dwell upon the particulars ; meditate on them at your leisure ; and let your hearts receive a deep impression of the sad truth which they severally proclaim. Such is the state in which believers once were, and the state in which all here are to-day who have not accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, who have not seen the glory of God in His face.

II. THE STATE INTO WHICH BELIEVERS ARE
BROUGHT BY THE GOSPEL.

"Out of darkness into his marvellous light" ; that is, God's marvellous light. Believers were in darkness, but they have been called out of it, and they are now in God's marvellous light.

All light is God's ; for it was He that created all light. The light of the sun is God's, for He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The light of the eye is God's ; "He that formed the eye can he not see?" The light of reason or intelligence is God's ; for "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul."

But my text speaks of God's marvellous light. It signifies the light which God has sent to man since he has become a fallen and lost creature, to illumine his soul and to show to him the path to heaven. It signifies the light of grace and truth which came by His Son Jesus Christ. All the light which God has given to His creatures may be called marvellous, but this in a special way is marvellous. It is marvellous because of the revelation which it makes of God's mercy and grace ; because of the blessings which it confers upon those that are brought under it ; and because of the light of eternal day unto which it will merge and make the souls of believers happy in the full enjoying of God and all eternity.

This is the light into which believers are brought and which confers upon them knowledge, the fear of God, faith in Christ, a good hope that shall not put its possessor to shame, and an earnest desire to grow in holiness and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

Such is the light into which believers are brought, the light of grace, the light of the gospel, the light of which Jesus Christ is the great author and medium to us ; for "in him was life, and the life was the light of man."

III. THE POWER OR PRINCIPLE

by which the change is brought about in the condition of believers, this is the calling of God. "Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

This calling of God is the effectual calling of which our Shorter Catechism gives a beautiful description in the following words, "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."

Such is the power and the process by which God calls men out of darkness into His marvellous light. The power is God's Spirit, the process is a spiritual process by which we get conviction of our sin and misery, enlightenment in the knowledge of Christ, a renewal

of our corrupt and stubborn will, and a persuasion and an ability to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel.

IV. THE DIGNITY OF THE ESTATE

into which believers are brought by the effectual calling of God. This is expressed and beautifully set forth by the words, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

Here the apostle multiplies words and figures to convey an idea of the dignity of the state into which sinners are brought when they are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. Look at each of these phrases.

"A chosen generation." Believers are called a generation, because they are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. They are of one stock and one lineage by the regeneration. And they are called a chosen generation, because God has of His own mere good pleasure, because it has "seemed good in His sight," taken them from among the rest of mankind and by an effectual calling brought them from an estate of sin and misery into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer. The word chosen, as applied to them, makes a contrast with the phrase in the preceding verse, "Whereunto they were also appointed." Such is the honor that has been graciously conferred upon believers.

"A royal priesthood." This phrase is equivalent

to saying you are priests and you are kings. You are priests of the seed royal. The kings were the chief civil rulers, and the priests were the ministers of religion. Both offices conferred honor upon those that filled them. And these titles are applied to believers to indicate the honorable and dignified position which they occupy. Believers are priests. All believers are priests ; not priests in the full sense in which Christ is Priest but in a secondary and subordinate sense. They are kings also, though not in the full sense in which Christ Himself is, but in a subordinate sense. He is a Priest upon His throne, and they are kings and priests with Him. Hence, John's doxology at the beginning of his revelation, " Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

" An holy nation." Yes, you are a royal priesthood, you are kings and priests, but in a way in which you are subordinate to an High Priest and a great King who is above you. While you are kings and priests you are also a *nation*, that have a priest and a king over you ; and you are a nation cleansed, purified, sanctified, made holy by your relation to that High Priest and great King. What were titles and distinctions to you if you were not holy, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

And to wind up all, you are " a peculiar people."

You are a people different from all other people. You have titles, and privileges, and honors which distinguish you from all other people. You have been purchased, you have been redeemed, you have been set apart, you have undergone a great spiritual change. You have God for your Father, Christ for your brother, grace for your support, the promises of God for your comfort and heaven for your inheritance and your everlasting home.

I have said that dignity is indicated by these titles and designations. Privilege and duty are indicated, too. Privileges corresponding to these titles belong to believers, and duties also devolve upon them.

V. SHOW PRAISES.

First, O believer, meditate on your state, be satisfied with it, and rejoice in it.

Second, The contemplation of it should support you under the trials and sorrows of life.

Third, The contemplation of it should stir you up to diligence and earnestness in the duties which devolve on you.

Fourth, And finally, this view of the state into which believers are—its dignity, its privileges, its prospects, and its duties—should move sinners to seek a change.

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

1 Peter ii: 10: "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God ; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

TIME past is contrasted with time present ; or rather, the estate in which believers were in time past is contrasted with the estate in which they are now. This is done frequently in the scriptures, and for obvious reasons. Two eminent instances of this style of composition are the following : Eph. ii: 1-6, " And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience : among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ; (by grace ye are saved ;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly

places in Christ Jesus" : and Titus iii: 3-7, " For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

In a late number of the *Presbyterian Record*, I find the following account of the conversion of a chief of the Loyalty Islands, taken from *The London Missionary Chronicle*. The story illustrates my text in a very forcible manner. The chief's name was Knaisilive. " He was a man of undaunted courage, of immense muscular strength, generous almost to a fault, very truthful, just to all, a friend of strangers (especially the white man), and very fond of children. Up to about thirty years of age he was a savage and a cannibal, and knew no better. During that time he practised polygamy. Christianity was then introduced by teachers of the London Missionary Society from Eastern Polynesia. He was prevented from openly espousing the cause of the teachers by his father, but he helped them all he could. When his father died he publicly cast away his heathen practices and put

away all his wives but one, and embraced Christianity. From that time to his death he was faithful to his profession, and may be truly said to be the founder and constant supporter of Christianity in Cari. Such a man at the head of affairs proved a great help in evangelizing the islands. He was constant in his attendance on the means of grace, liberal in giving, and faithful in exhorting others. When first taken sick, he was asked if he thought he would recover. He replied, 'I don't know. It is with God. I leave myself, body and soul, in the Lord's hands.' When near his end he said, 'I shall die at cock-crowing. Give my love to the missionary, tell him I am going to that place where both he and I have fixed our foundation. You cannot conceive how much I suffer, but the Lord helps me to bear it.' And so with words of admonition and cheer, the old chief fell asleep in Jesus."

But let us now look at the text. And, as the apostle was writing to believers, what he says here is applicable to believers everywhere.

I. LET US CONSIDER WHAT THEY WERE IN TIME PAST.

(a) "Not a people." If not a people, what were they? They had existence, they were moving on the face of the earth, and they were under civil laws and regulations like other people. How, is it then, that they were not a people? They were not a people;

because men in sin, and without God, and without an interest in Christ, are not worthy of being called a people. They are not a people ; on the contrary they are slaves, they are captives, they are dead in trespasses and sins. Yes, instead of being a people, they are a heap of separate, dead and decaying things.

(b) They had not obtained mercy, or, in other words, they were destitute of mercy ; if they have not obtained mercy, what are they ? or in what state are they ? Surely they are not in a desirable state. They are under sin, under guilt, they are under condemnation, they are under the curse.

The mercy of God has been looking towards His people from all eternity. But while it ran hidden and they did not obtain it, they were destitute of the privileges which mercy conveys and confers on those that have obtained it.

Now, it is well for believers to be at times reminded of their state of sin and misery, and danger and destitution in which they some time were. It is well for them to think at times of the "rock whence they were hewn and the hole of the pit whence they were digged." (Is. li : 1.) It will be beneficial for them to contrast their present condition with the condition in which they once were, that they may see the difference, and that they may be stirred up to act and live in harmony with the change through which they have passed.

II. WHAT IS THE STATE IN WHICH BELIEVERS NOW ARE?

(a) Now they are the people of God. The people of God! What an interesting title! What a blessed state to be in! Who would not like to be in it, and be called the people of God? Much is implied in this designation.

God has accepted them. He has taken charge of them; He undertakes to rule and protect and to guide and to save them. As people of God they have duties to perform and they have privileges to enjoy. As people of God, they are heirs, they are sons, they are on the way to the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," they are on the way to the kingdom that is "undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

(b) Now they have "obtained mercy." And what does it mean to obtain mercy? Surely it has a very important meaning. The obtaining of mercy is the ground on which they are the people of God. To obtain mercy means to be delivered from the curse, to have our sins forgiven, to be saved from condemnation, to be at peace with God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Indeed all the good things for time and for eternity, are implied in obtaining mercy. Mercy is the goodness of God in the shape of favor to the undeserv-

ing. The obtaining of mercy is that dealing of God with fallen sinners, by which the renewal of their nature is brought about ; that dealing of God with sinners by which they get the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," which He "sheds on them abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace they should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus iii : 5-7.)

Such are the two states that are here contrasted ; what believers were in time past and what they are now—what they once were and what they now are. The word of God is full of such contrasts. Often one thing is set over against another that we may see the difference between them. What believers once were and what they are now are contrasted, that a strong impression may be made upon our minds, that we may see our privileges and that we may live and act accordingly.

IN CONCLUSION, THEREFORE.

First, I ask you all, my hearers, Has such a change as this passed upon you ? Have you obtained mercy ? Are you the people of God ? It were well for you to know your real state. Seek to know it. Seek by self-examination ; seek by the close study of the scriptures "to know your state."

Now let me suppose that you have done so ; that you have examined yourselves in the light of scripture

and that you have found out your real state ; and that I have the two classes separate, the one here and the other there.

Second, To those who have been changed I say, Live and act according to your privileges. See that you "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." Live for Christ. Live for the honor and glory of Him who has brought the mercies of God to you. Put off the old man with its affections and lusts. "Lay aside every weight and the sins which easily beset you, looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of your faith."

Third, I speak to those who are supposed not to have been changed ; that are as they have always been ; that are not a people, and that have not obtained mercy. O, I ask you, Are you willing to die in that state? and go before your judge in that state ? I hope not. I hope none of you are so reckless and so regardless of your true interests. I beseech you, accept the mercy of God in Christ ; accept it now. "Now is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation." Repent, believe and be saved.

Mosa, Dec, 1881.

N. McK.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

CHRISTIAN ABSTINENCE.

I Peter ii: 11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

I. THE EXHORTATION. "ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS."

First. Abstinence. Here is abstinence. Peter preaches it. And it is total abstinence, too, although the word total is neither scriptural nor necessary. It is a duty to abstain. God enjoins it on all Christians. Peter speaks of it under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. To abstain signifies, to hold from, to keep one's self from, to avoid, to hold back.

Second. The things from which we are enjoined to abstain, namely, "fleshly lusts," or, as they are called elsewhere, "lusts of the flesh." It is generally understood what they mean. Paul describes them at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the Epistle to the Galatians, and in the Epistle to Titus.

Now, observe that it is fleshly lusts; that is, all fleshly lusts, from which we are to abstain; not the lust of drunkenness alone, nor the lust of covet-

ousness alone, but all fleshly lusts. It will not do to abstain from one fleshly lust, while we indulge in another. We are told that they who are Christ's have "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." We are directed to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

II. THE PRESSING OF THE EXHORTATION.

First. The apostle presses it by an expression of his affection towards the parties. He brings his own love to bear upon them. He says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you." Peter loved them; loved them tenderly and sincerely. God loves His people. Christ loves them. Love is the strongest moving force. "The love of Christ," says Paul, "constraineth us; for we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again."

Second. The apostle presses his exhortation by directing the attention of the parties to the state in which they are—their present position; and in language, too, which indicated or implied their future prospects. You are strangers and pilgrims, and as such it is necessary and becoming for you to abstain from fleshly lusts. You are strangers and pilgrims; abstain, abstain! It does not comport well with what you are, and what you expect to be, to indulge in fleshly lusts.

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(a) You are *strangers*. This is not your home. You seek another. You have another in the distance. Do not take up so much with your present home as if you had no other. You are strangers.

(b) You are *pilgrims* also, you are wayfaring people. You are pressing forward towards another country. It does not become pilgrims to be loitering on the way, and indulging in things which amuse, or please, or delight those that dwell and have their only portion in the country through which you are travelling. Therefore, abstain, for you are pilgrims.

Third, The apostle presses his exhortation by pointing out what fleshly lusts do. They "war against the soul." This indicates their character and their nature, and consequently the danger to which they are exposed who indulge in them. They war against the soul. But you profess to value the soul and wish to save it. That is implied in your being pilgrims and sojourners—"strangers and pilgrims." Therefore, abstain, abstain! Oh, abstain! If you do not, the lust of the flesh will ruin your souls. There can be no other result from indulging in fleshly lusts. Therefore, abstain.

Such is the exhortation, such the pressing of it. It is directed specially to believers.

And, if it is necessary to give such advice and exhortation to believers, what shall we say to unbelievers? 'O, you perish! You must, unless you turn. Turn, then.'

DISCOURSE XXIV.

HONEST CONVERSATION.

I Peter ii : 12. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles : that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

THIS and the preceding verse are closely connected. Together they give us the exhortation of the apostle in full. The exhortation consists of two parts : there are in it a *prohibition* and a *precept*. The prohibition enjoins abstinence from fleshly lusts which war against the soul ; and the precept enjoins an honest conversation ; that is, good works which may have the effect of arresting the attention of the unbelieving Gentiles, among whom the strangers and the pilgrims dwelt, and causing them to glorify God in the day of visitation.

In my last discourse, I endeavored to open up and enforce the prohibitory or negative part of the exhortation—the part which says, "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." To-day I will endeavor to do the same with the part which enjoins an honest conversation.

Scott, the commentator, says, "It was incumbent

on Christians to maintain an honorable and becoming conversation, in all respects, among their Gentile neighbors ; that whereas these, through enmity against God and true religion, and ignorant prejudices, were led to invent and propagate slanders concerning them, as evildoers or malefactors guilty of crimes injurious to society, because they would not join with them in the established idolatry ; Christians might silence their calumnies, and soften their prejudices by their evident and abundant 'good works.' Thus their example in the presence of their enemies, would concur with the preaching of the gospel in promoting the conversion of the Gentiles ; and in 'the day of visitation,' when the Lord should please to call them also by His grace, to glorify His name, the holy lives of His people would be owned as the means of that happy change." So far, Scott. His words are judicious and sound.

The text may be divided under two heads. First, *the honest conversation enjoined on believers*, and second, *the effect which that honest conversation may be expected to produce upon the surrounding community*. We shall look at these two things, in dependence upon the blessing of the Spirit of God to make our meditations pleasant and profitable.

I. THE HONEST CONVERSATION

enjoined upon believers, or as Scott calls it, "the honorable and becoming conversation."

Brethren, abstaining from fleshly lusts is only the left hand side of a Christian walk and life. Abstaining from fleshly lusts is only a clearing of the ground, the pulling and removing of weeds. No doubt the keeping down of weeds is a part of good husbandry, but it is only a part. It were a useless husbandry if there were no more than that. When that is done, the seed must be put in and every chance given to it to grow and ripen, and then it must be harvested and housed, and turned into use for him by whom the ground was dressed.

In like manner in the life of a Christian, to abstain from fleshly lusts is the clearing of the ground, that an honest conversation may follow, even good works which by Jesus Christ shall be to the praise and glory of God. Therefore, brethren, maintain an honest conversation, do good works, "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The unbelieving and the careless may speak against you as evil-doers. But do you maintain an honest conversation. They spoke against the Christians in Peter's day as evil-doers. The unbelieving Gentiles round about them spoke against them as evil-doers. As Scott says, they "invented and propagated slanders against them as evil-doers and malefactors that were guilty of crimes against society." And that kind of thing goes on more or less to this day. The unbelieving Gentiles in Peter's day were led by their enmity against God and true religion, and by ignorant

prejudices to speak against the Christians as evil-doers. And the same causes for evil speaking against honest and devoted believers, exist to the present time. Many are still instigated by enmity against God, and by ignorant prejudices to engage in evil-speaking. There is a wonderful tendency to this evil speaking in mankind, so much so, that believers themselves must be very careful lest they, too, indulge in this practice against their own faith, and so help the impenitent and the ungodly. That is a fleshly lust from which we must abstain, that we may maintain an honest conversation among them that are without.

An honest conversation or behaviour is a beautiful and good behaviour. And a beautiful or good behavior is one which is agreeable to the word of God, and His word is the standard and the rule of an honest and proper life. The phrase means a course of life filled up with good words, as indeed the phrase, good works, in the same text shows, for the phrase, good works, is used to express the same idea with an honest conversation.

Such, then, is the conversation or behavior which believers must have.

• II. CONSIDER THE EFFECT

which this kind of conversation may be expected to produce upon the unbelieving community round about. "That whereas or when they speak against you as evil-

doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." The effect which may be expected is the advancement of the glory of God. The glory of God is the matter which is very precious in the estimation of any true and genuine believer.

By their ignorance and unbelief men dishonor God when they speak of His people as evil-doers. But nevertheless, let believers maintain an honest conversation, for this very people who speak evil of them may by and bye be led to glory by their good works, and in the day of visitation this good result will be accomplished.

(a) Day of visitation. When God visits the ungodly by the preaching of the word and the power of the Spirit, to convince and to convert men.

(b) In that day the good works of believers will be a means in the conversion of sinners.

(c) And when they are converted they will acknowledge the good works of those that were Christians before them, and glorify God by so acknowledging them.

Now, this result is what believers may expect and should expect, and expecting it, it ought to act upon them as a stimulus or motive to make them show forth honest conversation and good works, with meekness and wisdom.

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DISCOURSE XXV.

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

I Peter ii: 13, 14: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the king as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

IN the preceding context the apostle gives a general exhortation regarding the practice of virtue. But it was necessary for him to descend to details, and to details he comes in my text and in the context immediately following.

And in this enumeration of particulars the apostle begins with our duty of loyalty to the civil magistrate. Loyalty and submission to civil rulers is a Christian duty. Let us look at this duty as it is here set forth. And let us do so, in dependence upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to guide, comfort, and bless believers.

I. LET US CONSIDER

the duty itself which is here enjoined, viz : submission to civil rulers.

(a) It is our duty in all things civil to obey the powers that be. It is our duty to keep the peace, to

pay taxes, customs, and other such dues, and to perform any labor which may be appointed by the civil ruler for the good of society.

This is the duty. Of course, in regard to sacred things and the worship of God, if the civil ruler usurps power over the conscience, and commands us to do things contrary to obedience to God and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, submission ceases to be binding, and we must be ready, if need be, to suffer rather than violate conscience and betray our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was in this way that the apostles themselves acted. The very apostle who here speaks and enjoins submission to the civil rulers, himself disobeyed them, when they offered to silence him from preaching Christ and proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God. On the occasion of healing the lame man who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple, when the High Priest and the rulers examined them, and threatened them for preaching in the name of Jesus, "Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts iv: 19, 20.) Again, when they were cast into the common prison, and the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth, the captain and the officers caught them and brought them before the council and examined them, Peter and the other apostles an-

swered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts v : 29.)

Yes, in things wherein the will of God and the mandate of the civil magistrate come into direct collision, we ought to obey God rather than man. But in all civil matters submission must be rendered to the powers that be. This is the duty.

II. CONSIDER THE EXTENT OF THE DUTY.

The extent of it is this, namely, that the king himself as supreme must be obeyed, and also governors that are appointed and sent by him. All officers of the civil administration must be obeyed. There is no exception made.

The apostle Paul is even more minute and particular in amplifying and urging the duty of obedience to the civil magistrate in the epistle to the Romans, 13th chapter.

Plainly, therefore, it is the duty of Christian men to avoid all concealing, and falsifying, and smuggling by which the government would be cheated of the dues which it claims. Smuggling across the lines that separate one country from another is a vice which should be discouraged by all Christians. And the subject is one that should not be kept out of the Christian pulpit. And especially should it be made prominent in circumstances in which men have strong temptations to overstep the boundaries of lawful traffic. I was for a part

of a summer preaching within a few miles of the boundary between this country and the United States, and I did not like it at all. Smuggling little parcels of goods was a common practice. It was wrong. It is always wrong. The scriptures condemn all deceptions, and disobedience to the civil magistrate.

III. LET US CONSIDER THE GROUNDS

on which this duty of submission to the civil rulers is based.

First, Obey, submit for the Lord's sake ; that is, because God appoints and ordains civil authority, and enjoins submission thereto. As Paul says, " There is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Rom. xiii : 1, 2.) Here is the ground, or a ground on which submission is based. " The powers that be are ordained of God." Therefore, as my text says, submit yourselves "for the Lord's sake." The Lord has appointed them ; the Lord enjoins submission, therefore submit.

It is clearly a solid and sufficient ground on which to base the duty in question. Submission to the civil magistrate is obedience to the Lord.

[The above discourse has not been finished.]

DISCOURSE XXVI.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

I Peter ii : 15, 16 : " For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men : as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God"

THE particle "for," indicates a connection between this text and the preceding verses which formed the basis of my last discourse. " For " introduces the statement regarding the will of God towards His people in the relation in which they stand to men round about them, as an additional motive to being subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. It was the will of God that there should be ordinances of men, for you to submit yourselves to them ; and it was the will of God that with well-doing in this connection, as well as in other relations, " ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

In further directing your attention to this text, in dependence upon the blessing and aid of the Holy Ghost,

I. I ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THE END

which it was the will of God to accomplish, namely, "the putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

(a) This statement shows plainly that there were

ignorant and foolish men in the days of Peter. Yes, ignorant and foolish men; there have been such in every age. There are such men among gospel hearers, or round about them that believe. There are some such men round about us. They are ignorant and foolish. Ignorance and foolishness go together.

(b) The ignorance and foolishness of these men were made manifest by their loud talking about believers and about the gospel of Jesus Christ. They were loud and ungenerous talkers. They talked about believers and against them, charging them with disobedience to the civil rulers, and with being, in consequence, unfriendly and dangerous to society. Indeed such a style of talking against Christians was common. And no wonder! On such charges Christ Himself was brought to trial and unrighteously condemned. And if men treated Jesus in such a manner, what wonder that they should often treat his followers in the same unfriendly and ignorant and foolish manner.

(c) It was the will of God that His people should put to silence this ignorant and foolish talking of men. God willed to put a stop to the fault-finding of the ignorant and the foolish. For it was very desirable that the ignorance of foolish men should be put to silence.

First, It was desirable for the sake of the peace and the comfort of believers. They could not have much peace and comfort while men spoke against them, and charged them with disloyalty to the civil rulers, and with being inimical to the interests of society.

Second. Again, it was very desirable that the ignorance of foolish men should be silenced for the sake of the ignorant and foolish themselves. For while they continued their loud, ignorant talking against those that were already believers, there could be no likelihood of their being brought over to the faith of the gospel themselves. The silencing of the ignorant would be a favorable step towards the winning of them over to the faith of the gospel.

II. CONSIDER THE INSTRUMENT BY WHICH GOD

willed to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. This instrument was the well-doing of His own people and especially their well-doing as subjects of civil governments. The well-doing of His people was the means or instrument by which He willed to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

It was not by the direct forthputting of His own will and power, that God purposed to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; but His will and purpose were to be accomplished through His own people and by the instrumentality of their well-doing.

And the apostle announces this fact to believers to move them to be careful to maintain their well-doing—to see to it, that their well-doing was made manifest to the ignorant and the foolish in order to influence them to maintain silence and to withdraw their charges.

Here, then, is the end to be accomplished—the

silencing of the ignorance of foolish men ; and here is the instrument by which the silencing is to be accomplished—the well-doing of believers. God wills that the ignorance of foolish men be silenced, and God wills the silence to be brought about by the well-doing of believers. And how is this instrument to be brought into action for the achievement of this end ? Only by the diligence and carefulness of believers, maintained by their own obedience to the will of God.

It is the will of God that you believers should, by your well-doing, achieve this end. This surely ought to be enough to move you. The will of God in regard to you. What else will move you if this will not ? The will of God ascertained, ought to settle all matters of dispute with believers, and ought to determine all matters of duty. The will of God ascertained, ought to be the strongest and the highest motive with believers.

Of course, God might have adopted some other way of accomplishing His purposes. He might in regard to this matter, we would suppose, have resolved to silence the gainsayers by His own truth and by His Spirit's power and grace. But what plan or scheme He might have adopted, is not our business. Our business is, if possible, to find out the scheme or plan which God has actually adopted, and so far as the actual plan lays any duty or obligation on us, to proceed at once to discharge them. And if it is His will to accomplish anything through us and by the instru-

mentality of our doings, we ought at once to see to it, that we proceed to do our part and to bring our doing into action in the way most fitted to reach the end which God wills.

III. FOR FURTHER PRESSING OF THIS DUTY

of well-doing in loyalty to civil rulers, observe the place which freedom has in the matter.

The gospel has indeed secured freedom for Christ's people. They are free; the truth has made them free; Christ the Son has made them free, and they are free indeed. But let them not misunderstand this, their freedom. You are free; yes, you are free to do well; you are free to be servants of God; but you are not free to do evil or to act a wicked part. You are free, but use not your freedom "as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." Yes, your freedom is as the servants of God.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

CHRISTIAN PRECEPTS.

I Peter ii : 17 : "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

BEAUTIFUL cluster of precepts ! Easily understood. All highly calculated to promote holiness. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The whole drift and scope of the Bible is to encourage men to become holy, and to enable them to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The gospel has been devised and given to men to turn them from sin unto holiness.

True provision has been made for this end.

(a) The death of Christ to remove guilt already contracted. His death has atoned for sin. It has satisfied justice. It has exalted the law and made it honorable. It has opened the door of mercy. It has propitiated God.

(b) The grace and power of the Holy Spirit working with the word of exhortation to induce men and to enable them to become holy. He has been promised, He is given ; sent from the Father and the Son.

Here we have four beautiful precepts. Let us take them one by one and consider them.

I. HONOR ALL MEN.

This may seem hard, but it is right and just and has, by the authority of God, been made obligatory. Why?

(a) Men were made originally in the image of God.

(b) However degraded or bad a man may be, he is of the same nature with yourself.

(c) He may be again restored by the gospel, and saved, and go to heaven.

Therefore honor him. Do not despise or condemn him; but honor him.

II. "LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD,"

Christians, believers in Christ. Reasons for loving them.

(a) They are redeemed by Christ.

(b) They are sanctified by the Spirit.

(c) They are God's children,

(d) They are brethren. Therefore love them. Bestow your tenderest, kindest affection upon them. This is right, proper, necessary.

III. "FEAR GOD."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

It includes all religion, or is accompanied by it. Faith, love, gratitude, reverence, obedience.

The wise man says " Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments : For this is the whole duty of man."

IV. "HONOR THE KING."

Be a peaceable, loyal, obedient, respectful citizen. Keep the laws of the land ; even when the laws are not the best for the community ; obey them while in force.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

THE DUTY OF SERVANTS.

I Peter ii: 18-20. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

THE apostle has been giving direction about kings and the honor which is due to them. The last words in the preceding verse are, "Honor the king." It is a Christian virtue to honor kings, to be subject to the powers that be, to obey magistrates, to respect and obey the laws that govern the civil community. But communities are made up of families, and if good order does not prevail in families and social circles, how can the body politic be sound and healthy? To be obedient to the law of God ; it is as necessary for Christians to cultivate and practise family virtues, as it is to observe and promote public virtues. Hence the apostle here prescribes the duty of servants toward their masters.

It is thus that the gospel takes cognizance of every condition and relation of life amongst men ; and is a light to the feet and a lamp to the path of men in

every position in which they may be placed ; whether they be kings or subjects, high or low, rich or poor, servants or masters. For the Lord has His people among the humble and the lowly, as well as among the rich and the exalted. Indeed, it is said, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise : and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in his presence." (I Cor. i : 26 29.)

We need not, therefore, be surprised at finding servants among those that are " Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and among those that are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"; and who are counselled to discharge Christian duties, and to walk worthy of Christ in all things.

In dependence upon the grace and aid of the Holy Spirit, we shall consider these three things : the duty of servants toward their masters ; the principle of it ; and the reward of it.

I. THE DUTY OF SERVANTS.

"Be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the foward."

(a) The duty is to be subject to them—that is, be submissive, patient, obedient under their orders and rebukes, and even punishments. Subjection, submission, obedience, this is the duty.

(b) The feeling with which the duty is to be rendered is fear, indeed, "all fear." Be subject unto them with all fear. That is, a feeling of reverence and respect for them, as being your superiors in rank and station.

(c) And the extent of the duty is shown in two ways.

First, "Be subject not only to the good and gentle but also to the foward." The fact that you may have foward, harsh, severe, cruel masters, does not relieve you from the responsibility of subjection to them. Be subject even to the foward. That they are foward, forms no reason why you should despise, or disobey, or refuse submission to them.

Second, Be subject to them by obeying their orders and commands, in so far as these are not contrary to conscience and the law of God. Subjection in doing can go no further than just commands; not the commands which may not be the wisest in your judgment, but the commands which do not make you vio-

late your faith in Christ, or your obedience to God. Be subject to them in doing all the work and labor which they may impose upon you, in so far as you are able. And not only be subject to them by obeying their commands, but be subject to them in the sense of not reviling or opposing them when they speak harshly, or rebuke, or reprimand you, or even if they should punish you. Subjection in doing and subjection in suffering, subjection to the good and gentle and also to the froward, this is the extent of the duty.

II. CONSIDER THE PRINCIPLE

of this duty of subjection to masters even when they are froward and cruel. The principle is conscience toward God. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

Observe, it will not be difficult to see that conscience toward God would teach a man to obey the commands of masters, to be obedient and subject, so far as action was concerned; but it will not be so easily seen nor acknowledged, that conscience toward God would teach a man to endure grief, suffering wrongfully; therefore, the apostle here insists upon this part of the Christian servant's duty, namely, that he must be ready to endure grief and buffeting, even wrongfully. To endure grief, suffering wrongfully, for conscience toward God is, he says, thankworthy. And

he goes on to show that it is not thankworthy nor attended with any glory, to suffer patiently when buffeted for faults.

Conscience toward God, when enlightened, teaches a man to do his duty as a servant, to be faithful to the interests of his master; and not only so, it also teaches him to endure buffeting and severe treatment, even when he is in no fault at all. This may seem strange, but when we consider the matter more closely our feeling of surprise will vanish.

(a) It does not mean that masters are at liberty to use their servants' cruelly, or to treat them wrongfully. No. If they do so they are answerable to God, and He will bring them to an account. "Vengeance is his, he will repay." But, as matters now stand in this world, His providence rules over men, and He assigns to them their places as high and low, rich and poor, masters and servants; and to Him men are responsible for discharging their duty, and for suffering, if called upon to do so, in the positions which they respectively and relatively occupy.

(b) And, moreover, a wonderful example of suffering is set before Christians in the gospel, as our apostle shows in the following context, which we may take the opportunity of examining more fully by and bye. Yes, let every Christian, and Christian servant, as well as others, remember that "Christ suffered for them, leaving them an example." He suffered, and suffering more or less, in some way or another, must be the lot

of His people in this world. Let conscience toward God, therefore, guide you to do and to suffer, and to suffer patiently even for doing well.

III. CONSIDER THE REWARD

of servants, when subject to their masters, in doing and in suffering, whether to the good and gentle, or to those that are froward.

First, This subjection, and their subjection unto patient suffering, even when not in the wrong, is thank-worthy. To suffer wrongfully, and to endure grief patiently for conscience toward God is thankworthy. In whose estimation is it thankworthy? In the estimation of the consciences of all enlightened men. In the estimation of Peter it was so. And it was so in the estimation of the Spirit of God, who inspired Peter to give these counsels to Christian servants.

Second, There is glory in this conduct. There is glory in it or connected with it. There is no glory in taking it patiently when you are buffeted for your faults. No, but there is glory in taking it patiently when you do well and suffer for it. And this glory consists in its being acceptable to God. There is glory in it in His sight. It pleases Him, and He looks with approbation upon it.

And, when a believer's conduct is acceptable to God, other blessings and rewards will be sure to him. He will cause that this wrongful suffering shall only

last for a season, and that, by and bye, the believer who has patiently endured wrongful suffering shall be put in possession of the blessings that are at His right hand. "In the keeping of his commandments there is great reward." In the approbation of God there is great reward; and in the full fruition of the kingdom that is above, and that is undefiled and fadeth not away, there is great reward. The reward is nothing less than the inheritance to which Paul refers, Col. iii: 22, 23, 24: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

IN CONCLUSION.

First, See here the nature of grace; it descends to servants, to men in the lowest ranks of society. It is as free to the poor as to the rich, to the servant as to the master.

Second, See here the virtue of grace. By it the lowest menial service is dignified and elevated. By it patient suffering becomes a virtue, pleasing in the sight of God.

Third, Learn here, in whatsoever position you are placed, to do your duty; to obey God and be content.

“ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.” (I Cor. vii: 21, 22.)

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DISCOURSE XXIX.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

I Peter ii : 21-23 : "For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps ; who, did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth ; who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

THE argument is one piece from the 18th verse to the end of the chapter, inclusive. The duty which the apostle enjoins and enforces by this argument is the subjection of servants to their masters, both in obedience and suffering, and especially the duty of patiently enduring suffering unjustly inflicted. And although servants are specially mentioned at the outset of this argument yet, as the argument proceeds, it takes a shape in which it is applicable to Christians in all the circumstances in which they may suffer.

To enforce the duty of patience and meekness under suffering inflicted by abusive and unjust treatment, we have here Christ suffering for us, and leaving us an example, and putting us under obligation to follow His example ; and these two things we will now consider, viz. : The example set before us, and the obligation under which we lie to follow this example.

And may the Spirit of the Lord bless our meditations and make them profitable to our souls.

I. THE EXAMPLE HERE SET BEFORE US

is, "Christ suffered for us." The example is a perfect one. The *person* who suffered was Christ the Son of God and the Son of Man; the Father's equal and man's brother and friend; the exalted one who was with the Father from all eternity, who "created all things," and "by whom all things consist." It was this divine person in our nature that suffered. The whole history of His life and death prove that He suffered and that His sufferings were great. He "suffered the contradiction of sinners against himself." He suffered abuse and indignity; opprobrium, ridicule, violence, slander, injustice, and a painful and ignominious death. Priests and people, soldiers and civilians, rulers and subjects all combined to revile and maltreat Him, to condemn Him unjustly, and to put Him to a cruel death.

The text calls our attention to His *innocence* under all the suffering which was inflicted upon Him. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." In His action there was no sin; in His words there was no guile nor falsehood. None that ever suffered in this world was so innocent, and pure, and holy, and harmless. But this holy and innocent One suffered abuse, indignity and shame. These two considerations

are weighty and important. One thing more is all that is required to prove that the example which He hath set before us, is the highest and most complete example that could be imagined—that it was a perfect example, and that one thing is not wanting.

Behold His patience and meekness under the suffering which was inflicted upon Him! "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." He did not return reviling for reviling, nor threatening for suffering. And yet, who ever had such good ground for doing so? Who ever had such good cause for speaking in "his own defence"? Who ever could have spoken so truthfully and justly to the reproach of His enemies? But amidst all the reproach of which He was the object, and all the suffering which was unjustly heaped upon Him, He preserved marvellous silence. He was, as the prophet says, "Brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Is. liii : 7.) Such was His patience and silence, that the judge who examined Him, marvelled. "Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly." (Matt. xxvii : 13, 14.) "When he suffered he threatened not." Nay, rather, He prayed, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "He threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

He left the matter in the hands of the righteous Father, and allowed events to run their course.

Such is the example and such is the perfection of the example. Dignity, innocence, patience, meekness, non-resistance, non-retaliation, but a forgiving spirit in the sufferer. How could an example more thoroughly perfect be conceived? The example is perfect, marvellous, great, glorious, divine. "Christ suffered leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." Here is the example which believers are to follow under suffering, here is the pattern which we are required to copy.

II. CONSIDER THE OBLIGATION

under which we lie to follow this example. The obligation! Is there an obligation? Are we bound to copy this pattern? and what is it that binds? May we not safely decline to follow the example? Ah, no, not safely, not wisely. If we refuse or decline, we do so at our peril. Cords bind us which we must not "break," nor "cast away from us." Let us see what these cords are. Let us see and consider what puts us under obligation to follow this example.

First, "He suffered for us." He suffered in our room and stead. He put Himself under the load of our guilt. He put Himself under the curse, and suffered the condemnation of God's law which was due to us. Were it not for our sins and fall He would not have been a

sufferer. It was absolutely necessary for our deliverance from the curse, that He should have suffered; nor did He shrink from it, and if He did not, has He not by this fact put us under the deepest obligation to do, and to endure, whatever He may deem necessary in the course of His providence to ordain or to allow to come in our way? Yes, but was it His intention or design to impose suffering upon us? This is a question which needs to be settled, and it is settled by our text.

Second, It was His intention to make His own suffering, and His patience and meekness under suffering an example for us. "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps," He suffered, and He was patient under the suffering, with the very design and purpose to make Himself in this matter a pattern for us to copy. He designed it. It was in His mind and calculation to leave us an example.

And this was His intention and design, because He knew that it would be necessary to make our salvation complete, that we should copy His example in this particular. He knew that by following His own example in this matter we should be practising self-denial, and the mortification of the corrupt principles of our fallen nature. Here, then, is a strong cord to bind us to the obligation to follow His example.

Third, Our *calling*. Our effectual calling by which the Holy Spirit brings us out of darkness into God's

marvellous light, constitutes a strong cord to bind us to follow Christ's example. "For hereunto were ye called." Hereunto! unto what? Unto the very duty of suffering patiently and meekly the calamities and trials which may happen to us in this life, and even sufferings inflicted upon us unjustly by those who should have treated us well; but who by their ignorance and the frowardness of their nature are often incited to do cruel and unjust things. From our Christian character, and our relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to manifest His spirit, and specially to follow His example of patience and meekness in circumstances of suffering unjustly inflicted.

Verse 24. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness."

In the 21st verse, the apostle says, "Christ also suffered for us." This is a link in the argument which binds believers to follow the example of Christ, in suffering patiently and meekly enduring it, even when they are innocent and doing well. In the words quoted we have the doctrine of the atonement which the apostle takes up again in this 24th verse.

Two things are in the part of the verse which we now consider, viz: The sufferings of Christ, and the effects of them on believers. Or, in other words, the atonement, and its influence in producing sanctification.

First, The sufferings of Christ which constitute the atonement. "Who his own self bare our sins in

his own body on the tree." In this He was different from the priests of the Mosaic dispensation ; for they laid the sins of the people, for whom they offered sacrifice, upon the heads of the animals which they offered. They did not bear them themselves, but laid them on their victims. But Jesus "bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

His own body in truth and reality. Not a body in appearance only that hung upon the tree, as some have taught. No, but a real and true body, which He took as part of the human nature, in which He bare our sins and died, which was raised up from the grave, which has been exalted to the right hand of God, and which will be His body to all eternity. The children, His brethren whom He came to save, were partakers of flesh and blood, and because they were so "He also himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. ii : 14.) "It behoved him" to do so ; it was proper and necessary for Him to do so, because He had conceived the intention of securing their salvation.

He "bare" them. Implying the idea of a load or burden. And this load or burden He bore as our substitute. It consisted of our sins, and was transferred from us to Him. "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all." The Father made the transference, reckoned our sins to Him,—counted them His,—imputed them to Him. But by this transference He was not made a sinner. He Himself was still "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

The guilt of them was transferred to Him, but not the turpitude—the punishment, but not the defilement. He took their responsibility, and became accountable for them, and He had to bear them in such a sense that they became His burden. His bearing of them was vicarious. Their evil deserts which was suspended over us He took upon Himself. He satisfied the claims of justice for us ; magnified the law which we had broken and made it honorable, by suffering its penalty and meeting all its requirements.

And He bore our sins *voluntarily*, of His own free will and accord. It was His own act to receive the nature of man into union with His divine nature ; and this He did for the very purpose of suffering for us. He did it intentionally ; and the Father agreed to accept Him as our surety and receive payment of our debts from Him. There was a covenant between the Father and Him by which He voluntarily assumed our responsibility, and the liability of suffering for our sins.

Second, The effect of His sufferings upon believers ; or the influence of them in connection with *sanctification*. “That we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.” Here we have the effects of the sufferings of Christ upon believers under two aspects, which must be viewed together, or side by side, or as two parts of one whole, in order that we may understand and appreciate the full import of the effect. By the oblation which Christ made when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, believers on the one

hand "become dead to sins," and on the other hand, by the same oblation, they "live unto righteousness."

Two questions arise here which demand our serious consideration. First. What is the import or meaning of this effect, which is ascribed to the sufferings of Christ as its cause? And, second, How does this effect follow this cause? Or, in other words, How does the cause produce the effect?

First. The import of the effect here ascribed to the sufferings of Christ. That the import is deep and weighty we may see, by considering the words used to describe or express it—that we "being dead to sins should live unto righteousness." It is a change from sin unto righteousness; a reformation of heart and life which consists in being dead to sins, and in rising to a new life of righteousness.

(a) There is a "being dead to sins"—this implies a previous living in sins. An experience this is, or was, in which the soul lived in sin, committed sin, and found pleasure in sin. But by the oblation of Christ the believer has died, and is now dead to sins. He does not commit sin now as he formerly did; does not live in it now as his element; does not now find enjoyment and pleasure in it. He is dead to sin; hates it, turns from it, abhors it, shuns it, and uses strenuous efforts to keep from it.

(b) There is a "living unto righteousness"; including a quickening, and a subsequent continuous living to righteousness. There is a dying and a coming to

life again, and a continuing to live to righteousness. The soul that has this experience lives to righteousness, delights in it, enjoys it, and finds it to be its element of life. When the person lived in sin, he was dead to righteousness; but now that he is dead to sin, he lives to righteousness.

Second. How does the effect follow the cause here assigned to it? or, in other words, How does the oblation of Christ in this sin-bearing produce the effect attached to it?

(a) As the Saviour intended and designed this effect He uses means to bring it about, means that are in their very nature suited and adapted to the producing of this effect. He sends the gospel to those who, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. Under the teaching of this word of truth—the “gospel of their salvation,” as Paul calls it, they become convinced of their state of sin and guilt, their alienation from God, and the consequent danger of their being forever banished from Him and cast into hell. And by the same proclamation of the gospel, God’s mercy is made known, and His love in sending His only begotten Son, and Christ’s kindness and love in coming and bearing their sins in His own body on the tree.

(b) He not only uses these means, but He sends His Holy Spirit to bless the means, to give effect to them in enlightening the minds of His people, and awakening them to a sense of their guilt and danger, and in persuading and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel.

(c) When they are thus effectually called by the Spirit of the Lord ; enlightened, awakened and made to understand their position, wants and necessities as sinners, and also brought to see the provision made for their salvation ; they then, by their own voluntary and deliberate act, give their mind and heart to the work of "dying to sins and living unto righteousness." The Spirit works in them to mortify, slay and kill their sins, and they themselves work to the same end. They slay themselves, kill themselves to sins; a suicide which is lawful and commendable, and in which they work in harmony with the Holy Spirit. This is the work of grace which the Apostle Paul means when he says, " Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth," etc. (Col. iii : 5-7.) And again, when he says, "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die ; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." (Rom. viii : 13.)

Thus are believers purified, sanctified, made holy. They gaze on Christ "bearing their sins in his own body on the tree," and under the influence of the sight "they die to sins and live unto righteousness." A renewing and sanctifying virtue flows to them from His great and perfect oblation. Brethren, this is the great principle of reformation, of salvation. Make use of it. Gaze by faith on that living, dying sacrifice and rise to newness of life.

" By whose stripes ye were healed."

This is the closing sentence in the verse which

points us to the central part of Christ's mediatorial work, and which is the fountain whence all the benefits of redemption flow. We shall simply notice three particulars that are employed in it.

First, The state before the healing. Disease—spiritual disease—derangement of the mental and moral powers; understanding darkened, conscience blinded, heart hardened, will perverted and disobedient. This disease is universal, hereditary and contagious, incurable by creature means.

Second, The physician and the healing balm. The prophet enquired, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?" (Jer. viii : 22.) This language implies that there were a physician and balm, but for want of application, the cure had not been effected. Jesus is the physician; His stripes are the balm. Believers have made the application by faith and are healed. "By whose stripes ye were healed."

How is this healing accomplished? Do these stripes, wounds, sufferings of Christ do it? They satisfy divine justice and remove the burden from the conscience; they give peace with God in justification by faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v : 1.) The application of these stripes is accompanied with the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii : 5.) The

grace of the Spirit who applies the benefits of Christ's redemption, puts an end to the reign of sin in the new birth, and in the process of sanctification ultimately removes it entirely from the soul—works the disease out of the system. But this process is advanced and matured by the instrumentality of the voluntary action of believers. They having been "made willing in the day of his power," "mortify the deeds of the body," "wrestle against principalities and powers," "follow after holiness," seek to be "conformed to the image of God's Son."

Third, The state of health produced. The following things may be mentioned as belonging to this state of health: Spiritual sensibility, by which is felt the truth of the word of God; a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin causing ever deepening repentance; adoring wonder at the sovereign mercy, grace and love of God; a sense of the preciousness of Christ and a reliance on Him alone for all the blessings of salvation; an increasing sense of the need of the divine power of the Holy Spirit in order to the maintaining, advancing and perfecting of sanctification; a growing taste for the word of God, and delight in studying it; an experience of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and a conscious love to Him and all His people; sensible fellowship with God in prayer; serving of Christ in the life; and a hope through the effectual working of divine grace of becoming fitted for glorifying and enjoying God through all eternity.

DISCOURSE XXX.

THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS.

I Peter ii: 25: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

THE apostle has been speaking very confidently in the preceding context, of the relation of the parties to whom he was writing, to Jesus Christ, and of their interest in the atonement. In this text he gives the reason for his speaking to them in the confident strains of counsel and encouragement. "For," saith he, "ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

In dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Spirit we will lay our minds to the consideration of this text to-day. And may this Spirit whose office it is to take of the things that are Christ's and to show them to believers, enlighten our minds and encourage our hearts, and enable us to walk worthy of Christ in all things.

I. WE HAVE HERE A DESCRIPTION

of the state in which believers were before they were turned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. 'Ye were as sheep going astray.'

"As sheep going astray." The figure used to illustrate the state in which men are previous to their conversion and union to Jesus Christ, is a very expressive and appropriate one.

Sheep astray are not in the safety and comfort in which they were before they went astray. Sheep going astray are away from the fold, and from the good pasture, and from the company of the sheep that are not going astray, and from the care and protection of the shepherd. Sheep astray are exposed to destruction. Sheep astray are very silly, and very destitute of any desire or skill or any sense to enable them to find their way back again to the fold.

This is an appropriate figure and image of men in their state of nature, and in their alienation from God. Men in their sinful state are astray. They are like sheep going astray.

(a) In their strayings and wanderings they have sustained a great loss ; they have lost their former homes, their former safety, and their former happiness.

(b) Further, they have lost their innocence, and holiness, and purity. When sheep are going astray they only lose comfort and safety. But when men went astray they lost their character ; they became guilty through their wanderings. Their wanderings are departures from God, and violations of His holy law.

(c) Moreover, in their wanderings men are as silly and unskilful as sheep, to find or devise a way of re-

turn. They have no ability, nor sense nor desire to return of themselves. They are therefore in a sad plight; they will never of themselves return; they cannot of themselves return. In their wanderings they are guilty and polluted, and exposed to God's wrath and curse.

And more particularly, what are the wanderings in which men move, before they are returned unto Jesus Christ the Shepherd and the Bishop of their souls?

(a) There are internal and mental wanderings—wanderings of the thoughts, of the heart, of the affections, of the reason, and of the will. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint . . . there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores; they have not been closed neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Is. i : 5, 6.)

(b) Then there are wanderings of the life—outward wanderings displayed in word and deed, and corresponding exactly to the inward wanderings which I have just described.

The tongue wanders in profane language, in vain conversation, in lies, taking the Lord's name in vain, cross words, passionate words, sharp words, careless words, sad and woeful are the wanderings of the tongue. It "is a little member, and boasteth great things . . . It setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell." (Jas. iii : 5, 6.)

The mind wanders, and the feet wander. Deeds

of wickedness, cruelty, and malice are performed. Journeys are undertaken in obedience to the ruinous appetites that rage within, in obedience to lust, and covetousness, and malice and revenge.

And there are wanderings of omission and neglect. Ah! how many wander on the Sabbath day and neglect to keep it holy! How many wander away from God's house and ordinances!

(c) In their wanderings men are in danger of perishing for ever. Their wanderings are guilty wanderings, incurring the displeasure and wrath of God, and unless they return from their wanderings, men must perish under the curse of the law and the wrath of God for ever.

Such are the strayings and wanderings of men, the wanderings and the strayings in which believers themselves moved, previous to their being "returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."

II. CONSIDER THE RETURN,

of which the text speaks. "Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

First. Here let us take a good look at Him to whom they have been turned. He is called here, "the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." Titles very appropriate.

(a) Shepherd is a title which is often used in the

scriptures to indicate what Jesus is to His people. He watches over them, they are precious to Him, He protects and provides for them. He is a good Shepherd. "The *good* shepherd, he giveth his life for the sheep." He purchased them at great cost and sacrifice to Himself, and they are His, and no man shall pluck them out of His hand ; He shall give unto them eternal life.

(b) Bishop is another title, which appropriately expresses what Jesus is to His people, and what He does for them. Bishop signifies overseer ; one who looks over men or things, in order to see that they are guided aright ; that they are protected from harm and rendered comfortable and happy. Jesus is the Bishop of souls. He sees, teaches, watches, feeds, instructs, governs, guides. Great Bishop ! blessed Bishop ! may we ever be under His eye and watchful care.

Such is He to whom believers are returned.

Second, Let us consider this return. How do they return ? How is their return brought about ?

(a) Their own act of will, and mind, and heart and strength have been in it. No doubt it has. But then previous to their own act, or their ability to perform the act, they have been under the influence of Him to whom they have been returned. He not only receives them when they return, but He has also been seeking them and bringing them back. He said Himself that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix : 10.) And He constructed the

parable of the lost sheep to explain and illustrate it. They are wandering lost sheep, and He came in search of them, and His coming and searching for them involves the following things:

(a) He came to die and atone for their sins, and take away the guilt of their wanderings. He gave His life a ransom for them. He satisfied the claims of justice; He "magnified the law and made it honorable"; and made a way for them to return.

(b) Again, He had His eye on them before they were returned. "Other sheep I have," saith He, "which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." He goeth into the wilderness after them by His word, and Spirit, and servants who preach to them the gospel. He goeth thus to call them, to invite them, to teach them, and to ply them with reasons why they should come. He searches for them thus; and when He has found one of them he layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing, and brings it back into the fold. So that His sheep are, in a sense, sheep before they are actually converted and returned. They are sheep by election; they are sheep by the covenant; they are sheep by the gift of the Father to the Son; yet not actually and truly Christ's sheep till they have been returned.

(c) Further, He takes them back by actual grace conferred on them, to enlighten them, to let them see the evil and danger of their wanderings, to show to

them the way to return, and to persuade and enable them to return. Thus they are made "willing in the day of his power." (Ps. cx: 3.) The preaching of the gospel is the means, and the Holy Spirit's grace is the power, and by this power working through that means, they are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They are brought back by grace.

(d) And further still, being influenced by the grace and Spirit of God, they come back of their own motion. They return willingly and deliberately, and put themselves under the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

(e) Lastly, when they have returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, they are afterwards led and guided, defended and fed.

IN CONCLUSION.

Have you, my hearers, all been returned? I wish to press this question upon you. It is an important inquiry. Do not shrink from it. Examine yourselves. Do not deceive yourselves! Be fair and faithful. And do not imagine that you will be saved unless you are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

To those that are returned I say, Keep close by the Shepherd. Be near your Bishop. Be humble and truthful and obedient. Stray not in paths of your own any more. Feed upon the green pastures and by the still waters.

To those that are not yet returned I say, Turn now. Listen to His call; accept His invitation. Listen to His word; quench not His Spirit. "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii: 11.) Turn from your wanderings. The time past is more than sufficient to have wrought the will of the flesh. Turn now.

DISCOURSE XXXI.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

I Peter ii : 1-3 : " Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings : as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby : if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Ps. xix : 9 ; Ps. xxxiv : 7 ; Ps. cxix : 58.

THREE questions I would like to ask my hearers to-day, all suggested by the text which I have just read : Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious ? That is one ; and a very important one it is. I pray you consider it and endeavor to answer it to your own consciences, and before the Lord. Do you lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings ? That is the second. It is a proper question for me to ask you from this pulpit. You will acknowledge, I have no doubt, the necessity and the importance of laying aside all these vices. But that is not what I ask. I do not ask, Do you acknowledge that all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speakings should be laid aside ? No, I do not ask any such question ; for it would not be a matter of great importance how you answered it. Few are so corrupted and demoralized as to answer

that question in the wrong way. Usually it is an easy and cheap thing to answer that question aright. But I ask, Do you lay these vices aside? Do you put them away from you and so lay them aside? To put them away is what my text exhorts. I fear that some of you do not lay them aside. These vices are neither scarce nor rare up and down the land. Alas! that it should be so. These vices are ruinous to the souls of men. The third question I ask is this, Do you desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby? Do you desire it? do you long for it? Have you a craving, a hungering for the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby? O, I fear that some among us are not growing at all, not making progress at all; not more spiritually or heavenly minded now than they were five or ten years ago. Alas, for those that are not growing! I fear they are dead, dead while it may be they have a name to live.

Now all these three questions which I have proposed, are very important. I pray you think of them, apply them to yourselves while I proceed further to open up and illustrate this text.

Now, you may observe that growth, or growing, is the thing to which the apostle directs the whole weight of his counsel in my text. The following particulars are plainly taught in the text. That all lively Christians, all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, should be growing; that in order to their growing, as a necessary preparatory exercise, they ought to lay

aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings ; and that the teaching of the word of God is the nourishment by which they will grow, which they should desire, and seek, and long for, for that end.

To illustrate and apply this doctrine I shall

I. EXPLAIN WHAT GROWTH,

or growing is meant here, and what it is to grow. The growth that is here meant is growth in the divine life, growth in holiness, in the image of Christ, in the likeness of God, in meetness for heaven. The Christian life is like the natural life in this, that it has a birth, an infancy, a period of growth and maturity, when we all come to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus.

(a) There is growth in knowledge. The lively Christian who has tasted that the Lord is gracious grows in knowledge. He gets clearer and clearer views of divine things. He becomes more and more acquainted with the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart. He also grows in his knowledge of the scriptures ; he finds wondrous things in the law of God, and so he makes it the subject of his study day and night. He acquires larger and deeper knowledge of the law of God, the grace of Christ, the mysteries of redemption, the ground of the forgiveness of sin and the principles of the gospel of the grace of God.

(b) The lively Christian who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, grows in faith. His faith increases. He gets rid of doubts, and fears, and perplexities, and he becomes more and more established in his faith ; he believes in Jesus Christ with a more implicit trust ; he believes the promises of God with a growing assurance that they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and that they shall most assuredly be fulfilled, in the experience of all those who accept the revelations of the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ.

(c) The lively Christian also who has tasted that the Lord is gracious grows in love. His love becomes warmer and purer, and less irregular, and more constant. He grows in his love to God and to Christ and to the saints, and to all the ordinances of God's house, to the word and to the sacraments, to the communion of saints and to prayer.

(d) In this growth of which I am speaking, there will be also growth in zeal and earnestness, and humility, and the various virtues and excellencies of the Christian character ; growth in meekness, growth in gentleness, growth in purity of thought, in purity of words and in consistency of life's actions. It has growth in the obedience of God's laws, and in the fellowship of God's Spirit.

Such is the end or object to which the apostle here directs his counsels and exhortations.

II. WE CONSIDER THE CONDITIONS

of this growth. The things that are necessary to insure it and to promote it.

First, It is of such persons as have tasted that the Lord is gracious, that such a growth as that which I have endeavored to describe and explain can at all be expected. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," take steps and adopt measures to insure your growth, to further and promote it. This is what I may call the exponential and essential condition of growth. No growth can be expected in those that have not tasted that the Lord is gracious, good, kind, merciful. This tasting bespeaks a change in the powers and faculties of the soul, a renewal of them enabling them to understand the gospel of the grace of God; to understand that God is just while He justifies the sinner that believes in Jesus Christ, and to taste the sweetness of the mercy that pardons, and the grace that helps in every time of need. They are all the fruits of Christ's death to the believer; they come to him through Christ; they are all the fruit of His death, as indeed the apostle goes on to say in the following verses.

Such, then, is one of the conditions of growth, and one which I have called the exponential and essential, or the vital, to distinguish it from those that follow, which are practical and are here pressed in an exhortation.

The *second* condition of growth is, the laying aside, or the putting off, all malice, all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings. These must be put off or laid aside. The exhortation is similar to that by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, " Lay aside every weight and the sins which easily beset you."

The Christian is somewhat like a house which is in bad repair, that has broken, soiled, and shabby furniture, and which must be furnished properly and decently for the lodgment of a prince or king. In the first place the old furniture must be put out--the broken, soiled and shabby furniture must give place, and make way for the new, elegant furniture. It must be put out.

Or, he is like a diseased man to whom medicine, sharp, searching medicine, must be administered first, before we can expect the nourishing food to do him good. A healthy state must be secured and restored first, and then the nursing food given. These sins, malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings must be laid aside, put off, that growth in the divine life may be promoted. These cannot lodge in the same soul with the sincere milk of the word. If these be not put out and laid aside, like food in a diseased stomach, the sincere milk of the word will only aggravate the soul's distemper. They are vile, filthy humors, that defile and corrupt the soul. Spiritual health and spiritual growth cannot be secured when they remain.

But oh ! brethren, how common these are ! Alas, how common ! Malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies are in men's hearts ; and therefore there are plenty of evil speakings. Is it not marvellous how fond men are of slanderous and bad stories about their fellow-men ! Yea, it is marvellous, and more marvellous still, that sometimes professing Christians indulge in them, tell them or listen to them without any annoyance or uneasiness.

But this condition of growth, though practical, and therefore put in the shape of an exhortation, is only preparatory. There is no nourishment in it. It only makes way for the nourishment by which the spiritual man grows. Hence

A *third* condition of growth we have here, and a practical one is this also—"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." Desire it, that ye may grow—with the intention and expectation of growing. The Lord has proved it to promote growth. Do you desire it, long for it, with this end in your view ? Desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby.

This exhortation was given by Peter to those that were scattered abroad at an early stage of the Christian life, when they might be regarded as yet only young Christians. But the exhortation is suitable for, and meant for Christians at every stage of their sojourn on earth ; for they ought always, during their whole pilgrimage, to be growing; and the only nourishment by which they can grow is the sincere milk of the word.

Brethren, I beseech you therefore, desire it. (a) Read it and meditate on it in the book of God : and, when you come to hear sermons, desire and pray that the sincere milk of the word may be given. The word of God, the milk, the substance of the gospel. Not human philosophy, not men's vain fancies will support and nourish the growth of the soul. The scripture alone, which is "given by inspiration of God," is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Brethren, I press the exhortation upon you. Lay aside malice, etc. ; desire the sincere milk of the word. And before I close : Are there any here that have not tasted ? O, taste ! O, taste !

DISCOURSE XXXII.

THE JOY OF BELIEVERS.

I Pet. i: 8, 9: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

JESUS Christ the Son of God, was on earth for a time. He came to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and to make an atonement for the sins of His people. And when He had fulfilled that mission He went back again to the Father. He will again appear. He will again come without sin, unto salvation. But now He is not on earth in bodily presence. His people do not see Him, nor hear His voice as they heard it when He preached the sermon on the mount, or spoke the parable of The Sower, or the parable of the Prodigal Son, yet they love Him, and rejoice in Him.

In my text the apostle accounts for this love and joy. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Faith in Christ, who confers the salvation of their souls upon His people, accounts for their love and joy. The faith in Christ which receives or secures the salvation of the soul, is the root or foundation of love and joy.

You have often heard me speak of faith as the root grace, the grace from which all other graces spring up, and out of which they flow. Faith embraces Christ, and rests upon Him as He is freely offered in the gospel, and thus accepting Him, thus embracing Him, it produces love to Him and joy in Him, and indeed all other Christian affections.

Here the apostle describes the state of mind of those to whom he wrote. In the world they were surrounded with manifold temptations, which caused heaviness and sorrow. But by the power of religion they were able to live above this heaviness ; and to drown and forget this sorrow in a great measure. Their faith in Christ made them love Him and greatly rejoice in Him, and,

Here we have the *object* of faith; the *end* of faith ; and the *affections* which spring up in the heart along with it, or out of it ; namely, love and joy. At each of these we shall look for a while, in dependence upon the blessing and aid of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

I. CONSIDER THE OBJECT OF FAITH—JESUS CHRIST,

“Whom,” that is, Christ, “not having seen, ye love”; “in whom,” that is, in Christ, “though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice,” etc.

(a) Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith. Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ ascended, is the object of the faith which saves. Faith embraces Him, receives Him, looks to Him and rests upon Him.

(b) No doubt faith looks at, and receives many other things, all things indeed, which are revealed concerning God and His will made known to men. Faith believes in God Himself, believes in Him as Creator, Preserver and Governor; as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith believes the entire word of God, accepts the Bible as a revelation from Him.

(c) But the special object of saving faith is Christ, Christ in His two natures—God and man; Christ in His love and pity, giving Himself for sinners, “the just for the unjust.” Christ abased, slandered, persecuted, blasphemed and crucified; Christ in His offices of Prophet, Priest and King; Christ who magnified the law and made it honorable; Christ who died and rose again from the dead; Christ who was in an agony, and in a bloody sweat; Christ who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,” is the object of the Christian’s faith.

II. CONSIDER THE END OF THE CHRISTIAN’S FAITH :

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” The end of faith is the salvation of the soul.

Christ is the object to which faith looks and which faith embraces, and the end or purpose for which it embraces Him is the salvation of the soul. The blessing which it receives is salvation.

(a) It was to this end that Christ came, that,

"Whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." He came "to seek and to save the lost." And He saves all that believe in Him. On them He bestows salvation.

(b) It was to this end that Christ commissioned His disciples to go into "all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He commissioned them to go, saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

(c) To this end we are exhorted to believe in Christ. To this end Christ invites us, and we are exhorted to look to Him, to receive Him and to believe in Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."

(d) This end the believer receives, when he believes. It is a present blessing. It is a present salvation. While there is much of it that is future, and that men cannot realize and enjoy till they leave this world and till the resurrection of the body takes place, and they are received home to glory; yet there is also much of it that the believer receives at once.

(e) He receives peace with God, deliverance from the curse, forgiveness of his sins, deliverance from wrath, receives rest in Christ, receives the Holy Spirit who is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." He receives an earnest and foretaste of that real Sabbath, the full fruition of which will be realized in the inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for believers.

Such is the end of the faith which embraces Christ. A great and glorious end indeed. No wonder that it is called precious faith. It is precious indeed. Precious because it rests on Jesus ; precious because it hath such a great and glorious end.

III. WE CONSIDER THE AFFECTIONS

of love and joy which spring out of faith and grow up along with it. Love and joy—these are two great and important affections. "Whom having not seen ye love." Christ ye love. "In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory : receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls."

No doubt there are other affections besides love and joy, that spring up along with faith, such as fear, hope, hatred, desire, sorrow, gratitude, zeal and compassion.

The fear of God is a religious affection, and so

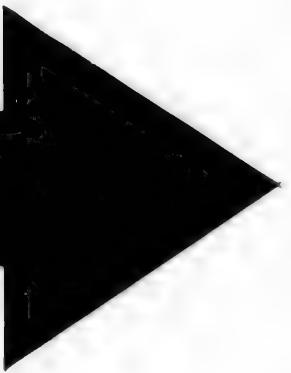
is hope of heaven and glory; and so, too, is hatred to sin and to all that Christ hates; and so also holy desire after God and holiness, and no less *sorrow* for sin and *gratitude* for blessings, *zeal* for God's glory, and pity and compassion towards men in their low and fallen estate.

But the apostle here mentions only two affections, love and joy, but those other are very appropriate in this connection. He brings before us here the object of faith—Christ, and the end of faith—the salvation of the soul; and he specifies two affections which spring up out of faith or along with it—one looking chiefly to the object Christ, and the other looking chiefly to the end, even the salvation of the soul.

Here, then, are two important affections of the heart of a believer in Christ Jesus, love and joy. Love to Christ and joy at the salvation which He confers.

(a) "Whom having not seen ye love." You love, then, although you have not seen Him, because you believe in Him; for other passages of scripture enable us to place these affections in this relation to one another, although this does not do it explicitly.

Faith works by love and purifies the heart and overcomes hatred; and who that believes in Him, and looks to Him, and contemplates Him, will not love Him? He deserves to be loved. He first loved us and gave Himself for us, prompted by His love. He is holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. He is altogether lovely. He is the chiefest, and, to the asved, "He is altogether lovely."



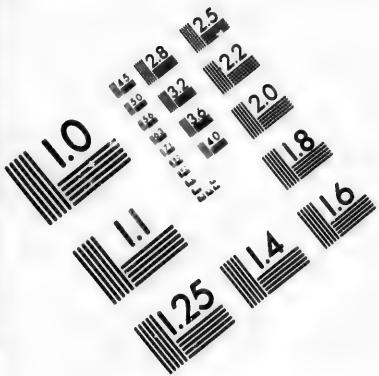
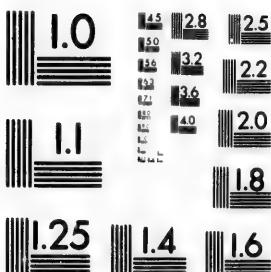
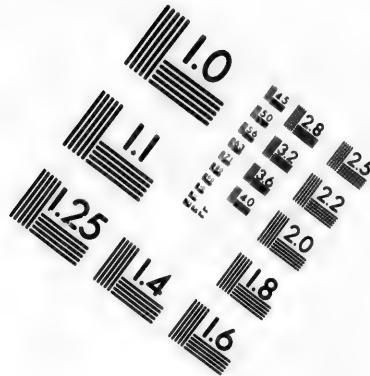
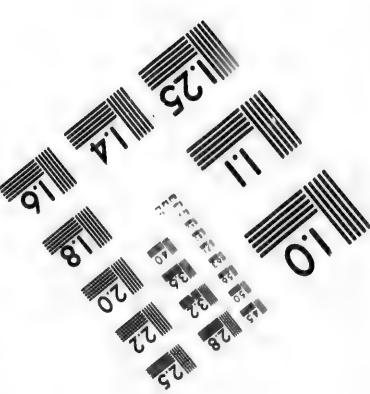
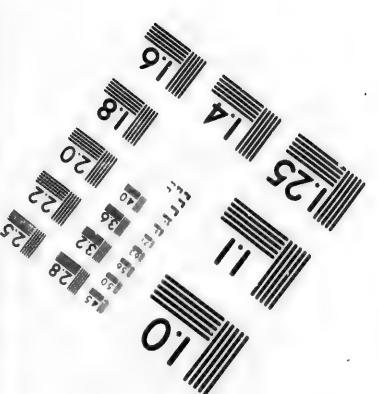


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Brethren, I beseech you, love Him. Oh, call forth a strong affection! Let there be heart and soul and enthusiasm in you. This is the affection in which many other affections are bound up, and from which, under proper conditions, they develop.

(b) "In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls."

Ye believe in Him to the salvation of your souls, and ye rejoice. Yes, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. What a joy! The apostle uses strong words to express the nature and the end of joy.

First, It is unspeakable. Cannot be expressed in language. Words of human language are not fit to convey it.

Second, It is a joy full of glory. Joy as if you were already in glory. Joy which is a foretaste of it. Joy which springs up in it, and will end in it.

CONCLUSION.

First, Here are tests of our state before God—love, joy.

Second, They are very much mistaken who think that religion is a gloomy and dark thing. Is love gloomy? Is joy dark and cheerless?

Third, Preaching, praying, singing, and the sacraments should be conducted to stir up the affections.

Fourth, The cold, indifferent state of feeling of some is a ground for suspicion as to their saved estate.

DISCOURSE XXXIII.

HOLINESS OF CONVERSATION.

I Peter i: 15, 16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Ps. cxi: 9; Ps. cxlv: 17; Ps. xciii: 5; Ps. cxix: 5-9.

In a recent sermon I explained the exhortation to be holy, both in its prohibitive and positive elements; and then I gave some directions to assist us in our honest efforts to comply with the exhortation. To-day I intend to discuss the motive, or motives, by which the apostle enforces the exhortation. These motives are found in the holiness or moral excellence of God, and in our relation to Him. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

The quotation "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is from Lev. xi: 44, 45. And although in the first place this was addressed to the Jews, apparently primarily to encourage and promote ceremonial holiness, yet the apostle here quotes it and applies it to believers under the New Testament dispensation. Thus the word of God, both in the Old Testament and in the New calls upon men to be holy. The Old and the New Testa-

ments alike require holiness in all that worship God and that profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the same reasons, God who hath called you is holy, therefore be ye holy. Thus we see that the great motive or stimulus to Christian holiness is the holiness of God.

✓ I. CONSIDER THE HOLINESS OF GOD. HE SAITH,

"I AM HOLY."

I told you in a late sermon, that when "applied to the Supreme Being, *holy* signifies perfectly pure, immaculate and complete in moral character." And as holiness is a substantive from *holy*, the holiness of God signifies His moral excellence.

The holiness of God is usually classed among his attributes and made co-ordinate with justice, goodness and truth. There is no fault to be found with this arrangement, although in one sense the holiness of God may be received as the brightness, the purity, the glory, or the beauty of His nature, and therefore of all His other attributes.

The doctrine of God's holiness is a very important doctrine. All that claim to be Christians and that wish to be intelligent Christians, should study and consider the holiness of God. It is frequently spoken of in the scriptures, and the compilers of our Shorter Catechism have given it a prominent place in their definition of God. They say, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom,

power, *holiness*, justice, goodness and truth." And they have put down the following texts as scripture proofs of the doctrine of God's holiness. Rev. iv : 8 : "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Also Rev. xv : 4 : "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." To these texts many others might be added, such as Exod. xv : 11 : "Who is like unto thee among the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." I Sam. ii : 2 : "There is none holy as the Lord." Ps. xcix : 9 : "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy." Ps. cxi : 9 : "Holy and reverend is his name." Heb. i : 13 : "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."

(a) Holiness is necessary to the being and nature of God ; in other words, His nature cannot be rationally conceived without it. Hence He Himself proclaims it. The seraphim which Isaiah saw in his vision, and the four beasts which John saw in his, which may be taken as representatives of the worshiping hosts of heaven sounded it out loudly, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." His people on earth acknowledge it, and worship and adore

Him for it. Even the heathen, and the heretics of the earliest centuries of the Christian dispensation acknowledged it, and when they could not account for the existence of sin or evil in the world, in their anxiety to save God from being the author of it, they asserted the existence of two eternal antagonistic principles : one the author of evil, and the other God, the author and fountain of good. We cannot conceive God without conceiving Him as holy, for God is necessarily and essentially holy. His holiness is as necessary to Him as His being and His omniscience, and His almighty power.

(b) God only is absolutely or undervably holy. ✓ "There is none holy as the Lord," none of himself, and necessarily and independently is holy but the Lord. All others that are holy have derived their holiness from Him.

(c) God is not only so holy that He Himself is pure and free from sin in His thoughts, and ways, and works, but also so holy that He cannot approve of any evil or sin committed by another, but doth abhor it. He cannot approve of sin in any being. Sin is the odious and hateful thing which He hates and abhors. He abhors sin necessarily, intensely, universally and perpetually. Everywhere, and in every being, and for ever He hates sin. He cannot get accustomed to it, so as to approve it or tolerate it.

(d) God is so holy and his holiness is of such a nature that He loves holiness in others and demands it in everyone that wishes to be at peace with Him,

and to secure His approval. Hence it is said, "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii: 29.) And also, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii: 14.)

II. WE PROCEED TO CONSIDER

the holiness of God as the great motive to make believers holy in all manner of conversation. This is the great motive to stir up and stimulate professing Christians to be holy. As such the apostle uses it here. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written Be ye holy; for I am holy."

I say that the holiness of God is here applied as the great motive to Christian holiness. I might say also that the holiness of God is the pattern or exemplar of Christian holiness. As He is holy, be ye holy, that is, be holy like Him. This is the great perfection of His nature, in which you are called to imitate Him. You are not exhorted to be powerful and almighty like Him. You are not directed to know as He knows, or to do great and marvellous things as He does great and marvellous things; but you are exhorted to be holy as He is holy.

(a) Study His law. Know it, for that is the transcript of His own holy nature, and the expression of His own holy will. Study His law, and study Him in His law, and study with the purpose of obeying.

(b) That you may be holy like Him, look at Him and study Him as He is revealed in Christ Jesus. "Christ is the brightness of his glory and the express

image of his person." (Heb. i: 3.) And Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. vii: 26.)

Such, then, is the pattern. The holiness of God is the pattern. Imitate Him. Be like Him. His holiness is here set before you as the exemplar which you are required to copy.

But it is as the motive to holiness that I would more especially set His holiness before you to-day. "It is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." God is holy, you need to be holy. He hath called you. You are His, therefore be holy, for He is holy. Let me endeavor to enforce the exhortation in this application of it by the following remarks:

First, He hath called you. Now to what hath He called you? What is the meaning of His calling? Here are a few passages which will let us see the meaning of God's calling. Peter himself saith in the following chapter, 9th verse, "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," and verse 21, "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us an example that ye should follow his steps," and in 2nd Peter, i: 5, he speaks of "The knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." And Paul explains his calling in different places; he saith to the Romans, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," and unto the Corinthians he saith, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," and to the Thessa-

lonians he saith, (I Thess. iv : 7,) " For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

He is holy that hath called you, and He hath called you from a state of darkness and misery and sin to a state of light and purity and safety. He hath called you to make you holy, as He is holy Himself. He hath called you to be His, and you profess to be His. But He is holy, and because you are His, you must be holy.

Second, you have deliberately answered the call. You have thereby acknowledged your need of holiness, and your desire to be holy. You are under the deepest obligation to be holy. He hath done great things for you, and you have accepted His offer of mercy in Christ Jesus.

Third, remember, that unless you are holy you are only deceiving yourself. For unless you kindly take the counsel your profession is a mere name.

- (a) Without holiness no man shall see Him.
- (b) Without holiness no man can have communion with Him.
- (c) Without holiness no man can dwell with Him.
- (d) Without holiness no man has evidence of being in a state of salvation.

Brethren, I beseech you, in order to be holy, be actuated and stimulated by the holiness of God.

Be often meditating upon it ; desire it ; adore and praise His name on account of His holiness.

Make God your friend, the friend of your life.

DISCOURSE XXXIV.

THE NEW BIRTH.

I Peter i: 23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

THIS text furnishes another argument for enforcing the exhortation concerning the duty of mutual Christian affection. In the preceding verse mutual Christian affection is enforced by the consideration of the purification of the soul. You have purified your souls, see that you love one another out of a pure heart fervently. And in my present text, as I have said, we have another argument for enforcing the exhortation to mutual Christian affection. You have been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," see that you love one another. You are brethren by an incorruptible seed; love one another.

In this text we have the new birth, and the seed by which that new birth is produced; we shall look at these two things, and then I shall again endeavor to enforce by them the important duty of brotherly love. And may the Lord, by His Spirit, teach and enlighten and lead us in the way everlasting! The Lord send forth His Holy Spirit that He may apply the truth savingly to our hearts.

I. CONSIDER THE NEW BIRTH,

or the regeneration. "Being born again." The new birth: this expresses the great spiritual change by which sinners that are rebels against God, that are indeed children of sin and of the devil, are made the children of God.

Two great difficulties stand in the way of a sinner's restoration to the favor and fellowship of God. One difficulty consists of guilt and the consequent requirements of law and justice. Christ, by His death, removes that difficulty for every one that believeth in Him. The other difficulty consists of the depraved and alienated state of man's nature and heart. This difficulty is removed by the new birth, or regeneration—the great spiritual change which removes man's unbelief, and the stubbornness that is in men's hearts and wills.

Adam was the son of God at his creation, and by reason of his creation. But when he fell into sin he ceased to be the son of God, and he became a son of sin and of the devil. His posterity are now like him. They are not sons of God but aliens. They have left His family and hence lost the dispositions of His children. Jesus Christ and His gospel find men in this position.

By the gospel, fallen men are again reinstated in their former condition and estate, and made children

of God. Believers are now the children of God. Prompted by His love to this world, God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save sinners, and to those that received Him He gave "power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name." (John i: 12.) Hence John (I John iii: 1) exclaims, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

Now, it ought surely to be an interesting inquiry, in our estimation, How are sinners and rebels against God's government to be made His children? What is the plan which God has adopted to bring about such a change in our condition and relationships? What is the change or process by which we are renewed—by which the dispositions and the sentiments of children are put into us? As a reply to this inquiry I make the following observations:

First, There was a legal difficulty in the way of our restoration to God. Our sins stood in the way, for justice and law require the death of sinners as the punishment due for the sins which they have committed. Jesus Christ removes this difficulty by His atoning death.

Second, There was a moral difficulty in the way of our restoration to God, consisting of the state of our hearts. This difficulty is removed by regeneration, or the new birth. It is this same change that is described in the Shorter Catechism in the answer to

the question, "What is effectual calling?" "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." On this change I make the following observations :

- (a) The new birth is a spiritual change, a mystical change, hence a sacred and secret and mysterious change.
- (b) The new birth is a great change.
- (c) The new birth is a blessed change.
- (d) In the new birth no new faculties are given to men, but the dispositions and habits of the soul are changed.

II. CONSIDER THE SEED OF THIS NEW BIRTH.

What is the seed? It is, according to this text, the word of God, or something that comes along with the word, and that is distinct from it. I think I correctly interpret the passage when I say, that the seed is the word of God. This being the interpretation, I open up this subject in the following way :

- (a) The seed by which the new birth is brought about is the word of God. The word which the truth revealed and made known for the salvation of men. And it ought to be received, therefore, as such.
- (b) This seed is not a corruptible seed, but an

incorruptible. It is dear, pure, and sacred, and the results of its operation, therefore, ought to be pure and clean. No corruption is in it. It is good, and sound, and healthy, and pure.

(c) This seed "liveth and abideth forever." It is a living, powerful thing. Not a cold, formal word, but a thing of meaning, and power, and substance.

Not that the new birth is brought about by the word alone without the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the efficient agent in this new birth. He it is that applies the truth with saving efficacy and renews the heart, taking away the stony heart, and putting a yielding, pliable, impressible and docile heart in its stead. There is an influence of the Spirit distinct from the truth, but along with it.

The Spirit prepares the mind for the reception of the truth. The Spirit enlightens the soul and renews it, puts light into it, gives it the power of spiritual vision that it may see the light.

The new birth may be taken, in a narrow sense, of communicating life which the Spirit does by His own omnipotent power; and, in a wide sense, in which the mind is enlightened and the truth impressed, and the soul consciously brought to yield to the influence of the truth. In this the word is the unseen instrument.

(a) By the word the sinner is convinced, aroused, made to seek reconciliation.

(b) It is by the word that the person and work of Christ are revealed; His nature, His mission, His offices are made known.

(c) And when the soul believes, submits, repents, prays, it does so in obedience to the word, so that the word is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation.

Such is the new birth and such the seed of it—the word.

III. YOU CAN EASILY SEE

the bearing of all this upon the duty of brotherly love.

(a) The renewed heart makes believers children of God.

(b) The new birth makes them the followers of Christ.

(c) The new birth makes them brethren. Hence the obligation on them to love one another with a pure heart fervently.

First, To believers, Yield yourselves, therefore, to the influence of the word.

Second, To unbelievers, Why will you not listen to the word and obey it?

(a) The word gives you a declaration of the plan of salvation—showing it.

(b) The word gives you God's promise to save all who submit themselves to that plan.

(c) The word commands, exhorts, invites you to accept the mercy offered.

(d) The word exhibits reasons why you should repent and believe—That you may escape wrath. You have set before you the plan of God—the love of God—the doom of hell and the hope of heaven.

DISCOURSE XXXV.

THE DESIRE OF THE ANGELS.

I Peter i: 12 : "Which things the angels desire to look into."

Ps. civ : 1-5 ; Ps. lxviii : 17, 18 ; Ps. ciii : 20.

THERE is a good deal said in the scriptures about angels and spirits—about good angels on the one hand, and about evil spirits on the other. Indeed, there is so much said of them and of the part which they perform in the providence of God, and in connection with the history of salvation, that we do well to consider carefully all that the scriptures say about them. We cannot overlook or neglect the doctrine of the scriptures concerning angels, without being chargeable with negligence about an important department of the revelation which God has given us, to guide, encourage and comfort us on our way towards the everlasting kingdom, where we hope to have the angels for companions among the scenes, and in the happy and delightful enjoyments of our everlasting homes.

If we look below us among the irrational creatures which teem on this earth of ours we discover readily that there are many orders of them—many ; I may say innumerable orders of them, from the tiny

creatures which the microscope reveals, but which cannot be detected by the naked eye of man, to the horse that paws at the noise of battle, and the lion that roams untamed in the impassable forest. There are many orders of them--many genera and numerous species, as the naturalist would say.

And now with this wide scale of diversity below us before our eyes, when we look up, and in some measure get hold of the truth that there are intelligent and rational beings in the wide distance that exists between us and God, reasoning from analogy may we not surely conclude that there are different orders of them, too. Yes, as has been well said by an able and intelligent theologian: "There is every reason to presume that the scale of being among rational creatures is as extensive as that in the animal world. The modern philosophy which deifies man, leaves no room for any orders of being above him. But if the distance between God and man be infinite, all analogy would prove that the orders of rational creatures between us and God must be inconceivably numerous. As this is in itself probable, it is clearly revealed in the Bible to be true."

I. THE BIBLE TEACHES

that the angels were created by God. They are not self-existent, nor did they exist from all eternity. God made them. It is said of Jesus, the Word which was in the beginning, and which was God. "All things

were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." (John i: 3.) Paul says of the same Jesus, our now exalted Redeemer, " For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before all things and by him all things consist." (Col. i: 16, 17.) The psalmist in the 104th psalm, speaking of the Lord his God, says, " Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire."

But I need not pursue this part of the subject any further, being confident that your own knowledge of the scriptures is sufficient to convince you that the angels as well as man, the good angels and the evil angels alike, were created by God.

II. THE BIBLE TEACHES

that the angels are in their nature superior to man. They are immaterial and incorporeal beings ; they are pure spirits. In the early centuries of the Christian dispensation, many held that the angels had some kind of bodies, bodies composed of light or ether or some subtle matter ; but since the beginning of the 13th century (Council of Lateran, 1215) the common opinion in the Church has been, that the angels are incorporeal. Hence they are invisible to the human eye. In this they are superior to man. And again they are above

man in their intelligence and power. They possess intelligence, will and power; and in these attributes they are superior to man. It is not revealed, indeed, what is the strength of their intellectual faculties, or what the extent of their knowledge, or what the greatness of their power; only it is made quite clear that, in all these they are superior to man. But although in the qualities mentioned they are great, yet in all these they are far, very far below God. They are not infinite in power or knowledge; they cannot create.

III. THE BIBLE TEACHES

that originally the angels were all holy; that while they were holy they had fellowship with God and were happy. But they did not all remain in their original state. Some fell from their first estate, and became devils or evil spirits. These were banished from their first abodes; "cast forth," and are said to be now "kept in chains of darkness against the judgment of the great day." But though kept in chains of darkness these do not restrain them to one spot or place. They have permission to roam over some large portion of creation, and carry on their wicked work of opposing God and deceiving and ruining men.

But while some of the angels fell from their first estate, others continue in their integrity and in their allegiance to God. These are the good, and it is of

them specially that my text speaks. For the language there implies that they desire to look into these things with relish, pleasure, delight, and admiration ; and this view of the passage is corroborated by other portions of the word of God. It is then to the good and holy angels, who did not fall from their first estate, that our attention will be specially directed in the sequel of this discourse.

My text says, "Which things the angels desire to look into." This leads us

IV. TO CONSIDER THEIR EMPLOYMENT

or employments, for here at least is one thing in which they are engaged. Here is a part of their employment, if not all. That it is not all, the Bible teaches ; but that it is a part, and, indeed, an impressive part, is asserted in my text.

Of the employments, generally, of the good and unfallen angels, the Bible teaches—

(a) That they worship God. They are represented as veiling their faces with their wings when they worship, and say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." The psalmist exclaims, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength." And they are commanded to worship Jesus Christ the Son of God. "When he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."

(b) Again, the Bible teaches that these good angels are employed in executing the will of God, both in His judgments and in His favorable dispensations. They appeared to Abraham, to Lot, and others, to reveal to them the will of God, or for their guidance or deliverance from impending calamities. They smote the Egyptians, they were employed in connection with the giving of the law, they accompanied Israel during their journey, and destroyed their enemies. They predicted and celebrated the birth of Christ; they ministered to Him in His crucifixion and sufferings (Matt. i: 20; Matt. iv: 11; Luke i: 11, 22, 43); they announced His resurrection (Matt. xxviii: 2); and His ascension (John xx: 12, and Acts i: 10, 11.) They delivered Peter from prison; they watch over children (Matt. xviii: 10); they minister to the heirs of salvation (Heb. i: 14.) They bear the souls of the departed to Abraham's bosom; they will attend Christ at His coming, and gather His people to Him (Ps. 1: 5.)

(c) In my text it is asserted that they desire to look into the things which the ministers of Jesus preach to the people, "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

Let us dwell for a little on the things into which they desire to look. The things which the prophets predicted about the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, and which the ministers of the New Testament preach.

That Christ became incarnate; that He went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the kingdom; that He was crucified by the hands of wicked men, yet delivered by the determinate counsel of God—and that mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are in Him met together for the salvation of all that believe—so that God is just while He justifies the sinner that believes on Christ.

And why do the angels desire to look into these things? Why, because these things reveal to them new phases in God's character; these things display in Him attributes which were not displayed towards their own fellow-angels who kept not their first estate. For Christ "took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham," that whosoever, of the sinful race of Adam, believeth on Him may not perish but have everlasting life.

And why does the apostle proclaim here that the angels desire to look into these things? Why, but to make the contemplation of these things more and more impressive on our minds. It is not to establish the truthfulness of the gospel, for that is surely established for all candid minds in the preceding connection. But when the ministries of prophets and apostles, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in connection with them, are certified, he proclaims that the angels desire to look into them, to add to the impressiveness of the proclamation.

First, O believer, is it not an impressive and in-

teresting fact that the gospel of grace by which you are saved is a subject of study to the angels, those high and holy beings who surround the throne of God, and worship Him and execute His commands? They look into these things, and will you not also study them, meditate on them, admire them, yield your heart and will and life to them, and resolve to serve God with your body and spirit that are His?

Second, O, unbeliever! O, impenitent and careless sinner, are you so stupid and earthly, and so drowned in the world and your sins and sinful pleasures, that you will not look out, nor study, nor contemplate, nor receive the glorious message of salvation into which the angels desire to look? They look, study and admire God's mercy and wisdom, they are ready to rejoice at our repentance, and will be glad to minister to you as an heir of salvation. Think of an erring son and kind father making proposals for his return home.

DISCOURSE XXXVI.

CALLING ON THE FATHER.

I Peter i: 17: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

THE apostle continues his exhortations. He has spoken a good deal about faith, and hope, and love, and the practice of holiness. He here introduces another affection of the mind, coupling it with the ordinance of prayer. The inculcation of fear may seem unnecessary after all that has been said of the lively hope that is to continue to the end; and there may not be readily apprehended such a close intimacy between prayer and fear as the words of my text seem to indicate. But I trust that as we proceed it will be made plain that there is a close connection between them, and that they are both necessary to give stability and permanence to the joy and the sobriety and the hope of which the apostle has just been speaking.

No girding up of the mind nor sobriety, nor diligence in the cultivation and the practice of holiness can supersede the necessity of prayer and of godly fear. No matter how strong in faith, how lively in hope, and how far advanced in the way of holiness a Christian

may be, he needs, while he sojourns in this world, to use prayer, and to cultivate the fear of God. "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

The word "if" is not to be understood as signifying that there was any doubt in the mind of the apostle as to whether the brethren to whom he wrote would call on the Father or not. It may be taken rather as indicating that they would call upon the Father, that the apostle was sure that they would call on Him. The word translated "if" signifies also though or since; and the text might be rendered as follows: "And since ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons," etc.

I. LET US CONSIDER

the duty and the privilege of calling on the Father.

(a) God is a Father. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is also the Father of believers. He is their Father by their regeneration. He hath begotten them again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And as father and child are correlative terms, the one implying and naturally suggesting the other, believers are the children of God. He is their Father; they are His children.

(b) As the children of God, it is the privilege of believers to call upon Him, that is, to hold fellowship

with Him, to converse with Him, to tell Him their mind and to pour out their hearts before Him. It is their privilege, and a great and valuable and blessed privilege it is, to call upon Him, and to feel assured that as Father He bends His ear and heareth the cry of His children.

(c) As children of God who here are surrounded with dangers, and who have many wants and necessities, it is the duty of believers to call upon Him for succour, aid and deliverance. They are here surrounded with many trials and difficulties, even with manifold temptations, and it is their duty for the sake of their own peace and safety to call on the Father. It is their duty, because they profess to believe the gospel, and the gospel directs and encourages them to call on the Father.

(d) It is the privilege and duty of believers to call on the Father, in the name and through the mediation of Christ. Jesus is the Mediator. Through Him, and through Him alone, may we approach the Father. He has opened the door of mercy for us; He has made a way for us unto the Father. He is our High Priest at the right hand of God, our High Priest who is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having been Himself tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." Therefore we are exhorted and encouraged to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."

Brethren, this ordinance of prayer is an important

ordinance ; so much so, that Paul says, in the Epistle to the Romans, " For there is no difference between the Jews and Greeks, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I beseech you, therefore, brethren, make use of this ordinance of prayer. Be not strangers at the throne of grace.

II. LET NOT YOUR APPROACHES TO

the throne of grace be presumptuous and irreverent. You may be bold, but with this boldness couple fear. Cultivate that fear of God which genders reverence and respect, and which will make you smite your breast in awe and reverence like the humble publican when you approach the throne of grace ; and not only when you are actually engaged in the duty of calling upon the Father, but always and at all times during your whole sojourn here—" pass the time of your sojourn here in fear."

Brethren, fear is a Christian grace or virtue, and the affection of fear must be cultivated and cherished by all who wish to be true and faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know that John says, " Perfect love casteth out fear." But there must be a way of harmonizing that saying of John with the many scripture passages that speak of the fear of God, and that inculcate it as a Christian grace or affection. No doubt the perfect love of a well-advanced Christian will more

or less thoroughly cast out the fear that has torment and pain and terror in it. It will cast out the slavish fear which makes the thought of God irksome and unpleasant, but it does not cast out the filial fear which seeks to please God, and which makes the believer jealous over himself with a godly jealousy. The filial and reverential fear which seeks to please and which strives to avoid offence, is a Christian virtue which must be zealously cultivated by all who wish to be holy, and to walk "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

This fear is a necessary element in the divine life. It cannot be neglected or overlooked any more than faith, and hope, and love and sobriety, and the practice of holiness. Indeed, there can be no right practice of holiness without it. It is part of the spiritual equipment of the believer. He cannot safely neglect or overlook it any more than the mariner can safely go to sea without ballast in his vessel.

What skilful mariner would ever think of going to sea in a vessel without ballast. The vessel might have sails and a rudder, and a compass, and anchors, and all the necessary things, but without ballast it would sure to be upset and lost. The ballast makes a ship heavy, and firm, and steady. It makes her take hold of the water, and secures her against being upset by the first brisk gale, or the first violent storm.

Now, what the ballast is to the ship, fear may be said to be to the believer. It makes him grave and steady and firm. It enables him to hold on and to maintain

his integrity amidst the storms and the billows of temptation and trials that may rise and rage around him.

III. LOOK AT THE TEXT

and we may take a glance at the following context, too, for the considerations by which the apostle would persuade to this godly fear.

The *first* consideration to persuade to this fear is, your responsibility to God. He is your Father indeed and you may and ought to call upon Him as such. But He is also your judge. He will take account of you; He looks after your doings; He guides every man's work, none can escape. He judges impartially. He is not biased nor blinded, nor can He be bribed. He judgeth "without respect of persons." He judges every man's work. And this must be taken as including works, and words, and sentiments. Everything that goes to constitute his character.

The *second* consideration to persuade to this fear is, that your present state is one of sojourn. "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," because there are dangers here. There are snares and temptations and provocations. Your whole time here must be passed in fear, for you do not know what dangers and evils may be close by, and ready to cast you down, or calculated to lead you astray.

Hereafter there will be no such reasons for fear. Hereafter there will be no snare, nor corruption, nor

assault of Satan to move you from your steadfastness or to cause you to sin. But here there are pits, and holes, and traps, and dangers of every kind ; the devil and his hosts ; men that are wicked, or reckless, or stupid, or unkind. Be on your guard. Fear, watch.

The *third* consideration to persuade to this fear, may be taken from the following verse : Forasmuch as ye know what price was paid for your redemption, you were not redeemed with gold and silver from your vain-conversation received by tradition from your fathers. You were redeemed from the conversation in which you were brought up, and you were redeemed with a great price, even with the blood of Jesus Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Think of this, and know that it was no trifling matter to redeem you. Fear and stand in awe, lest there be any danger of your missing this great salvation.

CONCLUSION.

To unbelievers let me say. God is your judge ; He will exact of you an account. Alas ! for you, if you do not become His child, renewed by regeneration of the Spirit and by faith in Christ and be reconciled to Him. Take Him as your Father. Look up to Him. Alas for you if you go to the judgment seat without peace with God. Be wise now. Make your peace with Him. May the Lord teach, and bless, and guide you.

DISCOURSE XXXVII.

FAITH AND HOPE IN GOD.

I Peter i: 21: "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

Psalm xxxvii: 39.

READ the text and the verse preceding together, that you may see the connection between them. Who are "you" for whom Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifested in these last times? How may this class of persons be known, or how may they know themselves? Faith is that by which they may be known; faith distinguishes them. "You who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

Here we have faith: its object, and its warrant. On these we will meditate for a while, in dependence upon the blessing of the Holy Ghost.

I. FAITH.

"Who by him *do believe* in God." Faith! what is faith? Paul describes it as follows: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi: 1.) And in our Shorter Catechism it

is said, that "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."

Faith is necessary to salvation ; faith is that which distinguishes those that have an interest in Jesus and are therefore saved, from those who have no such interest and therefore are not saved. Faith is the assent of the mind to truth. When the truth assented to, is concerning a person who proposes to do us good or to benefit us, then the faith becomes a trust in him or a reliance upon him. Jesus is a person who proposes to do us good, who offers to confer a benefit or blessing upon us on condition of our accepting it; therefore, faith in Him is a trust, or reliance. We receive Him and rest upon Him for salvation. We trust in Him or rely upon Him for salvation as He is offered to us in the gospel.

Faith is then the act of our mind and heart embracing the gospel,—accepting the mercy which God offers, and looking up, and hoping to be finally saved from sin, and the curse, and the wrath to come. And true, saving faith is the fruit of the operation of the Spirit of God in us. It is His office to apply the truth, to renew the heart, to enlighten the understanding, to renew the will, and so to dispose and enable us to embrace the terms of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The scriptures speak of a dead faith, a faith which does not save, a faith which a man may have and yet

"be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." (Acts viii: 23.) And we must be cautious and on our guard lest we be satisfied with such a faith, a faith which is not accompanied with salvation. Some believe the gospel on the authority of others, *i. e.*, because those whom they know believe it, and because history records that many have believed it in every age. Some believe the gospel because they have examined the external evidence of its truth; and some believe the gospel because it agrees with their own inward feelings and experiences. But others believe the gospel because of an inward illumination which they have, convincing them of sin and misery, giving to them an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ towards a perishing world, and renewing their wills and persuading and enabling them to believe.

It is this last kind of faith that is saving,—that unites us to Christ, and that gives us peace with God. And this leads me

II. TO CONSIDER THE OBJECT OF FAITH.

The object of faith is God in Christ. "Who by him," or through Him, that is, Christ, "do believe in God that raised him from the dead."

In one sense it may be said that propositions expressing truth, or statements of facts and principles, are the object of faith. The gospel is a history, a message, a revelation embodying facts and principles; but those facts and principles are so many paths or

channels to lead our thoughts up to God as He is revealed by Jesus Christ. God through Christ, or God in Christ, is the object of saving faith. Hence Christ Himself said, in His great intercessory prayer which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The object of the faith of believers is God in Christ. This is a general statement which includes in itself a great deal of meaning.

(a) The object of the faith of believers is God in Christ, loving the world in its fallen and ruined state. God loved the world. Even contemplating it in its ruins, God contemplated it with love, pity, compassion, kindness, good-will, and covenant.

(b) The object of the believer's faith is, God sending Christ His own Son into the world to seek and to save the lost. God sent His Son. He did not withhold Him when it was necessary to send Him to achieve the salvation of sinners. He sent Him to be incarnate—to be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—to be contradicted, and slandered, and persecuted, and finally to be put to death. It was a wonderful thing which God did by the mission of His Son Jesus Christ. He made an atonement for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

(c) The object of the believer's faith is "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (II Cor. v: 19.) He

actually reconciles unto Himself; He actually reconciles all those who come unto Him by Jesus Christ, not imputing trespasses unto them, but accepting them "as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them, and received by faith alone."

(d) The object of the believer's faith is, God in Christ setting the example of His own holiness before His own people. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

Such is the object of saving faith, God in Christ —God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ; God sending Christ His Son; and Christ the Son of God coming into the world, that the world through Him might be saved.

III. CONSIDER THE WARRANT OF FAITH,

or, in other words, the warrant which a believer has for believing in our Lord Jesus Christ: "God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." The resurrection of Jesus Christ, and His exaltation, constitute the warrant for believing.

(a) God raised Him up from the dead. He brought Him back again by way of dealing with Him as the successful sacrificer.

(b) God gave Him glory. He received Him back again to the glory "which he had with the Father before the world was." (John xvii: 3.)

(b) His resurrection and His exaltation were the chosen attestation that God was pleased with the sacrifice which Christ had offered up, and that He had accepted it as satisfaction to His law and justice.

(c) God raised Him up that the faith and hope of believers "might be in God."

Here then is the warrant of faith, or, in other words, the warrant which believers have for trusting in God through Jesus Christ. God "raised Christ from the dead and he gave him glory," because Christ had successfully accomplished the work of redemption. He raised Him up—He gave Him glory—to attest that He had accepted the sacrifice, and that the way of mercy for sinners was thrown wide open.

IN CONCLUSION.

First, To believers. See the grand warrant of your faith, and be more and more confirmed in your faith in Jesus Christ. Be established in the truth. Confirm yourselves in God. Be not ashamed of Christ. Cleave to Him through good report and through evil report.

Second, To unbelievers. Here is sufficient warrant for you to believe in Jesus Christ and to come to God by Him. There is evidence that God has approved of Christ's work. He has accepted the sacrifice in the room and stead of men. In attestation of the truth of Christ's dying declaration, "It is finished,"

God raised Him up from the dead. And as a reward to Him for what He had done and endured, He has exalted Him to His own right hand.

Sinner, O disregard not the gospel of the grace of God ! You need the salvation of the gospel. You need it. You can't do without it. Jesus died and rose again. He has atoned for sin. He has opened the door wide—opened it for sinners of your class. Accept the great salvation.

You will have no excuse for your folly when the day of account cometh if you reject Christ. I beseech you ! O, I beseech you, accept the offered mercy.

